

Knottingley St Botolph's C of E Academy

Primrose Vale, Knottingley, West Yorkshire WF11 9BT

Inspection dates

12–13 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- This is an improving school. Leaders have worked determinedly to improve the school since it was judged to require special measures in 2016. However, although improving, teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Variation remains in pupils' outcomes across the curriculum, including for those who are disadvantaged.
- Despite leaders' actions to improve pupils' attendance, this remains below the national average. A much higher proportion of pupils are persistently absent from school compared to the national average.
- Too many pupils are late for school.
- Pupils' progress in reading is too slow. Their views of reading are very mixed. Leaders' initial plans to improve reading have not had time to result in pupils' achieving better standards.
- A strong focus on rapidly improving pupils' outcomes in English and mathematics has meant that plans for middle leaders to dedicate the same focus to the progression of skills across subjects have not had time to come to fruition.

The school has the following strengths

- School leaders, who are relatively new to their posts, have been dedicated and focused in their work to address previous weaknesses in the school.
- Members of the interim board have used their skills and experience well to support and challenge the work of school leaders in providing a better quality of education.
- Strong leadership and improvements in provision and teaching have resulted in children making strong progress through early years.
- Strong support from the diocese and effective partnerships with other schools have strengthened the improvements being made.
- Consistent routines and good teaching in phonics are successfully supporting the development of pupils' skills in reading and writing.
- Leaders have prioritised improving policies, procedures and everyone's understanding of safeguarding. Safeguarding is effective.
- Work to support pupils' personal development is strong.

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 teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - making sure that adults have consistently high expectations of the quality of pupils' work
 - ensuring that all pupils, particularly those in lower key stage 2 and those who are disadvantaged, know how to improve their work and are encouraged to do so.
- Improve outcomes in reading across the school by encouraging pupils' enjoyment of reading and improving their fluency and understanding of what they read.
- Work with parents and carers and a range of other agencies to instil the importance of pupils attending school every day and on time so that attendance and punctuality improve and no learning time is lost.
- Improve leadership and management by further developing the roles of middle leaders to improve the progress all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the appointment of the new principal in 2016, all leaders have worked successfully together to gather an accurate understanding of the school's performance and the improvements needed. Leaders are accurate in their evaluation of the school and they have identified the right priorities for improvement.
- The principal leads the school with vision and clear ambition for all pupils. She is highly organised in her approach to school improvement. Throughout the challenges of leading a special measures school and the considerable changes in the support received from external bodies, she has been proactive in seeking out effective partnerships with other schools and trust leaders. Leaders have bought in support from Enhance multi-academy trust. These partnerships have significantly supported school leaders' improvement work.
- As well as the regular strong support the school receives from the diocese in guiding the religious nature of the school, the diocese school improvement partner has provided increased support in improving overall effectiveness. She has liaised well with the interim advisory board and school leaders so that there is a common, collegiate direction for improvement.
- Leaders have prioritised addressing the important aspects of pupils' welfare and safety as well as accurately identifying and tackling weaknesses in teaching. As a result, everyone is confident that pupils are learning in a safe environment where good behaviour and strong moral values are part of everyday life.
- To increase the capacity for and speed of improvement, the leadership structure has been reorganised. The vice-principal and assistant principal research, evaluate and successfully direct improvement for particular aspects of the school's work. For example, the assistant principal has worked with leaders from another school to look at ways to improve the information provided by the school assessment system. As a result, school leaders have refined their current information to give a much clearer view of the progress individual and groups of pupils are making across subjects and over their time in school.
- Plans have started to equip middle leaders with the skills and understanding to effectively check and review the learning taking place in their area of responsibility. Middle leaders feel well supported in establishing the tools they need to carry out this work. They are positive about the support they have had from senior leaders in how to successfully evaluate the quality of lessons and pupils' work. They have started to look at teachers' planning alongside the national curriculum to check that there is a progression of skills as pupils move through school. Leaders agree that foundations for this work are now in place and that the next step will be for middle leaders to check pupils' progress in books and in lessons, to accurately inform their direction for improvement.
- Leaders responsible for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are new to their roles. They know that the provision for these pupils needs adjustment to ensure that all pupils are making strong progress

across the curriculum. They have started plans to address this.

- Leaders have given careful attention to raising pupils' awareness and understanding of the diversity of life in modern Britain. Close links with another school in Wakefield have brought opportunities for pupils across both schools to email each other and take part in visits to each other's schools. Pupils have found out about similarities and differences in their home and school lives, ranging from the music lessons they have to their beliefs and cultures. These friendships have been celebrated by pupils sharing this work in assembly.
- Leaders have worked hard to develop effective partnerships with parents. There are regular opportunities for parents to come into school, to join in learning, such as in the early years 'stay and play' sessions, and to celebrate pupils' achievements, for example in the class showcase assemblies. Parents welcome these opportunities and are very positive about the changes that have taken place since the appointment of the new principal.
- Leaders have made their expectations about good pupil attendance very clear. They have implemented a wide range of incentives and celebrations to encourage good attendance. However, despite the high profile this work has had and the time leaders have spent on it, families have not fully engaged in this aspect of the school's improvement. Attendance figures are below the national average and are not improving. In addition, too many pupils do not arrive at school on time. Leaders are disappointed that this is an area of weakness that has not improved.

Governance of the school

- The trust acted promptly to replace the governing body with an interim advisory board (IAB) after the last inspection. Members of the board have the requisite skills, knowledge and experience to support school leaders in improving provision and raising achievement. Although rigorous and focused in its challenge to school leaders, the IAB has clear trust and confidence in the principal. The partnership has been effective in the journey of improvement already travelled, and there is a shared vision for further development.
- The IAB has a clear understanding of the accountability of its role in terms of safeguarding and finances. Its members ask searching and detailed questions of leaders to check the effectiveness of systems and procedures in place.
- Careful consideration has been given to the school moving from being a stand-alone academy to becoming part of a larger trust. Well-thought-out plans are in place to ensure that the transition is a smooth and cohesive one that is right for the pupils at St Botolph's.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- No time has been lost in addressing the concerns raised in relation to safeguarding at the last inspection. Leaders have made sure that policies, systems and procedures are in place and effective, and that they are well understood by everyone.
- Safeguarding messages and information aimed at adults and pupils are very visible

around school, and pupils refer to them in their conversations about keeping safe. They are able to talk confidently about the range of activities and learning they take part in to keep themselves, and others, safe. A number of pupils have roles that include taking care of others, such as the 'befrienders'. When speaking to one of the inspectors, pupils were very clear that they would tell an adult if they were concerned about another pupil because 'they need to be safe'.

- Five members of staff are fully trained as designated safeguarding leaders. Other staff members are clear that they can report concerns to any of these leaders, and that this will be overseen by the principal. Record-keeping is of high quality. There are clear, effective procedures to make sure that there is good communication between the safeguarding leaders so that concerns are addressed fully and frequently checked up on.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Leaders' focus on improving teaching and learning has resulted in stronger teaching overall, though this is not consistently good throughout school.
- Changes in staffing are still ongoing. School leaders have tried to support these unavoidable challenges, getting new staff up to speed with expectations and school strategies as quickly as possible. However, these changes have affected the pace of improvement in teaching.
- Expectations in reading and systems used to support pupils in developing their reading skills are not clearly defined throughout school. Teachers use varied strategies and have different expectations of pupils in terms of reading throughout the week and in what they read at home. As a result, there is variation in pupils' fluency in reading, their understanding, their knowledge of authors and their enjoyment. Leaders have already identified these differences and have highlighted reading as a school improvement priority.
- In phonics, there are much clearer expectations in teaching. All adults give pupils clear direction in how to say sounds and write them down. Phonics teaching is engaging and holds pupils' attention. Frequent praise, high expectations and repetition to consolidate learning make younger pupils feel successful and become more confident in their learning. Consequently, pupils make strong progress and get off to a good start in developing their reading and writing skills.
- The direction teachers are given by leaders to support pupils in making improvements to their work has resulted in most pupils making stronger progress in writing and achieving higher standards by the time they leave school. The focus given last year to pupils' writing for a range of purposes across the curriculum has resulted in high-quality records of pupils' work. Pupils' books clearly show progression in writing, as well as forming a memorable and celebratory record of their learning in other subjects. Through some of the changes in staffing, the expectations of pupils in the quality of their work and in how they make changes to their work to improve it have not been consistently high.
- In mathematics, there are similar differences in the effect teaching has on pupils' learning. In all classes, there is a focus on encouraging pupils to apply their skills to

problems and to talk about their working out and their answers. Most pupils are confident to share their ideas and reasons in mathematics. In most classes, developing pupils' fluency in number is high profile and results in pupils confidently and swiftly applying their skills to purposeful tasks. In some classes, pupils do not have the same opportunities to embed their basic number skills, and therefore they find the application of these skills more difficult.

- In upper key stage 2, pupils' work, school assessments and lesson drop-ins demonstrate that pupils are making strong progress across subjects. Teachers have high expectations of the quality of pupils' work and of their conduct. Adults take into account pupils' prior learning and match work well to their needs. They quickly address any misconceptions they spot in pupils' learning, and as a result pupils confidently and swiftly move on.
- Teachers give pupils opportunities to develop their skills across a wide curriculum. Physical education, religious education and science are particularly high profile, although there is a clear commitment to making sure that all subjects are covered throughout the year. Middle leaders are starting work to check that teachers are planning for clear progression in subjects across pupils' time in school.
- Shared meetings, good communication between staff and specific training result in teaching assistants generally providing strong support to pupils in their work. They use questions effectively to get pupils to explain and consolidate their learning.
- Teaching assistants who provide one-to-one support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities know their pupils' needs well and the next steps they need to take. They use resources and careful questioning to help these pupils to make good progress. Leaders know that the amount and type of support these pupils receive is varied and affects the rate of progress that they are making. They know that the expectations of the progress pupils can make need to be high, whatever pupils' needs and starting points are.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have the knowledge and ability to stay safe through the careful teaching and guidance they receive from staff. They are fully confident in speaking to staff if they have questions or concerns, for example about fallings-out with other pupils or online safety. They, and parents, particularly mention the work of the learning mentor in helping them to manage their feelings and worries, and subsequently become more successful and happy learners.
- Leaders' commitment to gathering pupils' views is impressive. Adults frequently ask the opinions of pupils of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to find out about their views of changes that have taken place and those they would like to take place. As many of these questions are focused on the main school improvement priorities, leaders use pupils' views to further check the success of their work.
- Pupils learn about British values and understand that they live in a diverse society.

They understand what bullying is and have a developing awareness that some people suffer from prejudice-based bullying. Universally, they reflect that they accept differences and respect everyone, whatever their backgrounds. They are encouraged to find out about people who influence our lives in Britain.

- Pupils demonstrate self-confidence, though are not yet self-assured learners. They are very receptive to adults' advice and direction. Older pupils in particular are confident in sharing their ideas with others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils overall requires improvement. Although pupils' attitudes to school and learning are positive, and pupils are polite and show respect to adults and other pupils, many are often absent from school.
- Despite leaders' efforts to highlight the importance of pupils attending school every day and offering incentives to encourage them to do so, pupils' attendance is consistently below the national average each year. Almost a quarter of pupils have attendance that is below 90% already this term. In addition, a significant number of pupils are late to lessons each day.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school, in lessons and at playtime is consistently good, and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils respond quickly to requests from staff. They engage happily and confidently in discussions about their learning and their school.
- During the inspection, all pupils joined together for Christmas dinner. The busy but happy and friendly 'buzz' in the hall was a good example of the positive attitudes pupils display towards each other. Pupils helped each other and the dinner staff. They remembered to be polite and appreciative throughout the excitement of the event.
- Pupils are proud of their school and of their work. They value the support the adults in school give to them, to help them with their learning and with their feelings.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Because inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching, the progress that pupils make throughout school is varied.
- Over time, the standards reached by pupils by the time they leave key stage 1 have fluctuated. Pupils' current work shows that their progress across key stage 1 continues to be variable.
- By the time they leave school, a similar proportion of pupils reach the expected standards in writing and mathematics as the proportion nationally. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading remains smaller than the proportion of pupils nationally. A higher focus on supporting the most able pupils has not had time to result in better outcomes for these pupils in reading or mathematics.
- Across key stage 2, there are notable differences in the progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work and school assessment information

show that pupils in upper key stage 2 currently make stronger progress than those in lower key stage 2.

- Pupils' outcomes in phonics over time are similar to the national average. Pupils' current work and well-established routines in teaching demonstrate that good outcomes in phonics continue.
- As there is variation in the progress that all pupils are making throughout their time in school, there are similar differences for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leadership for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the support they receive have experienced considerable change. Clear plans are now in place, but the progress that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make from their different starting points varies widely.

Early years provision

Good

- Strong leadership, improved systems for assessment and carefully planned provision that is well matched to children's needs result in children making a strong start in early years.
- Most children start Nursery with skills that are below those that are typical for their age, particularly in areas such as managing their feelings and behaviour, and speaking. The early years team carefully match tasks and activities to the next steps that children need to make. As a result, by the time children leave Reception, they have skills that are more typical for their age.
- Effective communication between all staff in early years ensures that everyone knows each child well, any barriers children may have to their learning and how to support them in taking the next steps to improve across each area of the curriculum. Clear systems for making frequent checks on children's learning are now in place and are well understood by everyone. Consequently, children of all abilities are now moved on quickly in their learning. Leaders agree that they need to ensure that this is further developed in Reception, so that more pupils reach a good level of development by the time they leave early years.
- Routines and systems for teaching phonics are well established. Teachers and teaching assistants consistently demonstrate accurate sounding, letter formation and pencil grip to make sure that children get off to a good start in developing their reading and writing skills. The Nursery and Reception indoor and outdoor provisions have plentiful opportunities for pupils to try out their early literacy and mathematical skills.
- Adults make sure that children know that keeping safe is part of day-to-day life. They constantly talk about safe ways to use equipment and treat each other. During the inspection, children told an inspector why it was not safe to use some of the outdoor equipment that day: it was very icy and they might slip. Adults make safety checks on the early years environment. They have appropriate first aid and safeguarding training. Safeguarding in early years is effective.
- Leaders and staff have been committed to making sure that they provide parents with opportunities to be involved in their children's learning. Parents welcome being able to contribute to their children's online record of learning, providing valuable information about the achievements their children make at home. During the inspection, parents

were in class for a regular 'stay and play' session. Parents and children took part in engaging activities together that promoted conversation and consolidated basic skills. For example, one group were throwing paper snowballs at pretend snowmen, counting how many snowballs it took to knock the snowmen over.

School details

Unique reference number	139107
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10038085

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	339
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Hanson
Principal	Donna Adams
Telephone number	01977 677494
Website	www.stbotolphsacademy.co.uk
Email address	info@stbotolphsacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2016

Information about this school

- The school is the only academy in St Botolph's Trust. Since the last inspection, planning has been taking place to move to becoming part of a multi-academy trust.
- At its last inspection, the school was judged to require special measures.
- A new principal joined the school in 2016.
- An interim advisory board replaced the governing body in August 2016.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who require support for their special educational needs and/or

disabilities is much lower than the national average.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in a range of lessons. Much of this took place jointly with the principal and the vice-principal.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work across the curriculum. For English and mathematics, this scrutiny of work took place alongside middle leaders.
- During the inspection, inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to them informally in lessons and around school, and held formal meetings with pupils.
- Meetings took place with school leaders, teaching and support staff, representatives from the IAB, the diocesan school improvement partner and representatives from the supporting trust.
- A range of documentation was studied, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, school improvement planning, documents relating to pupils' behaviour and to safeguarding, assessment information and attendance information. Minutes of the IAB were also looked at.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before school to gather their views.

Inspection team

Kate Rowley, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Knowles	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Campbell	Ofsted Inspector

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