

# St Helen's Catholic Primary School

West Street, Hoyland, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S74 9DL

## Inspection dates

9–10 January 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Most pupils make good progress during their time in school. This is the case in all areas of the curriculum.
- Most groups of learners achieve well and standards have improved since the last inspection, including those of disadvantaged learners and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. However, some of the most able pupils do not always make rapid enough progress in English.
- Teaching meets the needs of pupils well, especially in mathematics. Teachers assess pupils' learning well and use this assessment to plan work that is engaging and challenging for most pupils. However, teaching does not always challenge the most able pupils in reading and writing enough.
- Pupils' conduct is good and they engage well in their learning. This contributes to their good progress. They behave well at all times of the day because they enjoy school and value and understand the rules. Most parents have a very positive view of the school. A very small minority of parents feel that their concerns are not always heard by leaders. Leaders acknowledge that they need to find different strategies to engage with all parents and carers.
- Leaders have had a positive impact on the school since the last inspection. They hold staff to account well and provide many good training opportunities. On the whole, this has improved teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- However, the teaching of phonics is not strong. Leaders have not effectively tackled this or provided training to improve the quality of teaching in this area. There are some missed opportunities, however, to reinforce phonics in key stage 1.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils reinforce their reading, writing and mathematical skills well across a range of subjects.
- Pupils are given regular opportunities and experiences which enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Such experiences also support pupils' understanding of British values and prepare them well for life in modern Britain.
- Children in early years get off to a good start. They are well engaged and make good progress. The curriculum suits their needs well. At times, the most able children need to be challenged more.
- Pupils do not attend well enough.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and therefore outcomes, by ensuring that:
  - phonics is taught effectively in key stage 1, and pupils are given regular opportunities to learn, practise and apply their knowledge of letters and the sounds they represent
  - phonics skills are regularly reinforced in pupils' learning of reading and writing across the curriculum
  - the work set is challenging for all groups of learners, across all key stages, in reading and writing, in particular, and for the most able learners.
- Continue to improve the attendance of all pupils, by engaging with all groups of parents to communicate the important messages about school, including the importance of their children attending school every day.
- Develop the impact of leaders and managers on school further, by ensuring that the monitoring of phonics:
  - is regular and done with rigour, so that clear action points for improvement can be identified and worked upon
  - leads to clear advice and appropriate training opportunities for all adults teaching phonics, so that they understand how to improve their practice.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The executive headteacher and head of school have made effective improvements to the school since their arrival, following the last inspection. They have, with leaders in the school and with support from within the federation and governors, taken an accurate account of the school's strengths and areas for development. This has come from regular and rigorous monitoring of the provision, which has led to good-quality training for all staff.
- Monitoring of phonics teaching has not been as rigorous and has not provided staff in key stage 1 with sharp, precise feedback, as well as good training opportunities, to improve their practice. This has led to pupils in key stage 1 making slower progress in this area of their learning than seen previously.
- Appraisal of staff is completed thoroughly and has been one of the improvements since the last inspection. Leaders set targets which are challenging and meaningful and which teachers say are fair. Teachers are supported in meeting these targets with regular meetings with line managers, as well as bespoke training to improve their practice. The system also ensures that teachers are accountable for the progress of their pupils. Where targets are met, teachers are rewarded through pay progression.
- Middle leaders are effective in their role and well supported by senior leaders in school and other middle leaders across the federation. Subject leaders have clear action plans to support further improvement and can show progress against these actions. Such clarity has supported improvements in the curriculum and its impact on pupils' learning.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is strong. These pupils' needs are well understood and met well through a variety of programmes and strategies. In addition, their teachers are well informed about these pupils' needs and so work effectively in planning and providing them with activities that support them well in class. The funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well used.
- The provision for pupils who are disadvantaged and who attract the pupil premium funding is well led. These pupils' attainment and progress are improving and in some areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics, their progress is much more rapid than that seen nationally. The school uses the funding effectively to provide these pupils with support in the classroom, where necessary, as well as opportunities to take part in a variety of clubs and trips to enhance their knowledge of the wider world.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is well spent. Pupils report that their lessons in PE are fun and very active, as was observed during the inspection. Learning includes a strong focus on how to improve pupils' physical development and their understanding of how to keep themselves fit and healthy. Extra-curricular sports clubs further enhance pupils' enthusiasm for sport.
- The vast majority of parents mostly have a very positive view of the school. They recognise the clear improvements that have taken place since the arrival of the head of school and executive headteacher. They correctly believe that their children are safe and happy at school and feel well informed about how well they are doing in their studies. They feel that behaviour is good and that there is little bullying, and any

concerns they raise are listened to and dealt with appropriately.

- A very small minority of parents are less positive about the school and do not feel that leaders are approachable. Leaders gauge the views of parents regularly and are regularly in the playground when parents pick up or drop off their children. However, they acknowledge they could do more to ensure that they hear all groups of parents' views so that any misconceptions about the school can be quickly resolved.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and engages pupils in their learning. Pupils report, and books show, that learning is enjoyable and that they reinforce their reading, writing and mathematical skills well across different subject areas. Pupils also approach learning in varied ways, which serves to enthuse different groups of learners. For example, in Year 6, pupils learn about how blood flows and how the heart functions in their bodies. As well as reading on the subject, and writing about it, pupils have created models of the internal organs and have used computer software to create their own animation of how these work.
- However, in key stage 1, there are some missed opportunities to allow pupils to practise their sounds and this means that some pupils do not secure their phonics skills quickly enough.
- The curriculum also offers pupils the chance to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As St Helen's is a faith school, pupils have a clear understanding of their own faith. This can be seen from early years throughout school. For example, children in Reception independently re-enacted the Epiphany without adult support, following a collective worship session. In addition, pupils learn about other faiths and cultures and demonstrate a good understanding of these, as well as respect for them. Equally, pupils understand the need for respect and understanding of different lifestyle choices. For example, they report that any prejudicial bullying would not be tolerated and that despite individual differences, all pupils are accepted for who they are. In this way, the pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The additional support for the school from the local authority and the diocese has been effective and has contributed to the school's improvements from the last inspection. The local authority and the diocese work together to provide the school with an external view of its strengths and identify where improvements are needed. The school has also brokered support from other schools in the area to ensure that new leaders in the school and across the federation have a good model to follow when developing their own plans and strategies for improvement.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have effectively improved their support of the school since the last inspection. Governors work across the three primary schools which make up the federation and many of those now in place are new to the role. They demonstrate a high level of commitment to the school and the pupils.
- Since the last inspection, governors have worked effectively to ensure that all governors understand the level of commitment needed, and attendance at meetings is high. They have also taken account of the range of skills they have and where there are gaps. As such, the range of competencies of the governors is now much improved

so that they can properly support the school.

- Governors understand their role and are well trained to be able to challenge and question the school. Therefore, they know what the school is doing well, where and how provision has improved over the past two years, and what the school needs to do next to improve.
- Governors hold leaders to account around systems such as appraisal. This ensures that systems are fit for purpose and supports improvements across all aspects of school life. They also take account of extra funding the school receives, such as the funding attracted by disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and analyse the impact of this funding on these pupils. This has helped leaders use this funding effectively.
- Governors understand the role they play in ensuring that pupils are protected and remain safe in school. They regularly review and update their policies and protocols so that these are in line with regulations set by the government and are implemented properly and thoroughly in school.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that staff receive regular training to refresh the understanding of their role and responsibilities in keeping children safe at all times.
- Parents are given information on how to keep children safe at all times, including when they are at home. Parents and pupils know what to do if they have a concern and whom to go to.
- Policies and protocols are regularly checked and updated and there are good systems in place to ensure that updates are communicated to the pupils, parents and staff.
- The school works with a range of external agencies, which support them in their work with vulnerable pupils and families.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Teaching is good and meets the needs of most groups of pupils well. This demonstrates an improvement in the school since the last inspection and is confirmed by pupils' improved progress and attainment, which are now good.
- Teaching has a positive impact on most groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Middle- and low-ability pupils are also well taught and are supported well by the activities planned for them. However, at times, work is not challenging enough for the most able pupils in English.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are well taught. Mathematical skills are very well developed and pupils make very strong progress in this subject. This is because teachers take close consideration of what pupils can and cannot do and plan activities accordingly. Work is also very challenging, supporting pupils in making very rapid progress. Reading and writing are well taught as well, with pupils regularly reinforcing their basic literacy skills and applying them across the curriculum.

- Phonics skills are not well taught. In key stage 1, activities to promote secure phonics skills are not always well planned and are not closely linked enough to regularly practising the sounds. As a result, there are gaps in some pupils' knowledge of their letters and sounds.
- Questioning is strong. Teachers use it as a way to assess and gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding of their learning. In addition, it is used as a technique to promote good oral communication skills among the pupils, who develop well in this area. Teachers urge pupils to give well-rounded, reasoned answers, which helps them to deepen their learning and understanding of a topic.
- Teachers use a variety of strategies to assess pupils' learning and this is done regularly and with accuracy, so that it informs planning that meets pupils' needs well.
- Teaching assistants are well used in school, especially in key stage 2. They are skilful and understand the pupils' needs. As a result, they help pupils to access the learning but also persuade pupils to work increasingly independently, which is especially beneficial for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, where teaching assistants are used to deliver phonics sessions in key stage 1, the quality of provision is inconsistent.
- In key stages 1 and 2, teaching is good in terms of developing pupils' skills in mathematics. Teachers also promote a strong passion for reading and writing among pupils, supported by a creative curriculum that engages pupils. Pupils read regularly and write often. Strengthened by their reading, pupils are imaginative in their writing. There are some issues around the accuracy of their spelling in key stage 1, however, where phonics skills are not well developed.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school makes sure that pupils are safe and safeguarded in school. Pupils report that they feel safe and can say why this is. Parents also believe that their children are safe.
- Bullying is rare, as seen from the records in school, and from the views of parents and pupils. Pupils also report that if they have any concerns, or are upset, they can tell an adult and it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents also largely believe this to be the case. A very small minority feel that their concerns are not listened to and that leaders are not approachable.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. There are events and lessons which help pupils understand the potential dangers in using the internet, how to avoid them, and what to do if they are worried. Parents also receive information to support their children to use the internet safely.
- Pupils enjoy sport and are given lots of opportunities to do a variety of sports, during school and in after-school clubs. These sessions also focus on helping pupils understand the benefits of being fit and healthy. Pupils also report that school dinners

are healthy and enjoyable, with a large majority of pupils opting for these every week.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well at all times of the day and enter into all activities with enthusiasm and respect. They do as they are told but also adhere to the well-established routines in place, meaning there is little need for pupils to be reminded how to behave.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, as seen from their conduct in class and their work in books. Books show that pupils are highly productive in lessons and present their work well. They also use teachers' advice to improve their work because they want to do well.
- Where poor behaviour has been more serious, the school has worked effectively to improve it and to support pupils who have found it difficult to manage their own behaviour. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of serious behavioural incidents since the last inspection.
- Attendance is low and is not improving fast enough, although the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is reducing. The school works successfully with the majority of parents and pupils, who understand the need for regular attendance. However, there is a small minority of pupils and parents who have not responded as positively to the school's message on this issue.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' outcomes are good and have improved well since the last inspection. This is the case in all areas of the curriculum, with the exception of phonics, where outcomes are not as strong. In mathematics, progress and attainment are particularly strong.
- Most groups of pupils achieve well, including disadvantaged, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and pupils of middle- and low ability.
- The most able pupils' progress is strong in mathematics but it is not always rapid enough in reading and writing; not enough of these pupils are exceeding age-related expectations because work in English is not always challenging enough.
- Outcomes in a wide range of subjects are good because pupils are well taught and well engaged in their learning. The curriculum is used well to reinforce pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills and to provide opportunities to broaden and deepen their understanding of these skills by giving them practical ways to apply their learning. This is the case across the key stages, although it is stronger in key stage 2. In key stage 1, there are some missed opportunities to reinforce pupils' phonics skills.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- In general, children arrive in the Reception class with levels of development and skills

which are typical for their age. From these starting points, children make good progress and a very high proportion reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. As a result, children are well prepared for key stage 1.

- Phonics skills are well taught in early years and there are opportunities to reinforce children's phonics knowledge in different parts of the curriculum. This supports their reading and writing development well.
- Staff work effectively to promote strong speaking and listening skills among the children. This tends to be the weakest area of development on entry to Reception, and there are varied ways in which adults support this gap in the children's development. As a result, the children make good progress.
- Assessment of children is regular and accurate. It informs planning so that activities and the physical setting of the provision meet children's needs and interests well. This means that children are well engaged and keen to learn and make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the provision and what its strengths are. They also know where improvements are needed. Leaders work closely with adults in the setting to ensure that planning is appropriate and that the curriculum enthuses children in their learning.
- Leaders and other adults work well to engage parents, who are very pleased with the setting, reporting that their children settled well at the start of the year and are excited to come to school. Parents also feel their children are safe in school.
- The setting meets the needs of middle- and low-ability children well. However, the most able children's needs are not always met as closely and not enough of these children move beyond the expected standard for their age.
- Children conduct themselves well. They understand what is expected of them and they follow the routines well. This is because the routines are regularly reinforced and are clear to the children.
- In addition, children demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to try all aspects of the provision and to learn new skills.
- Safeguarding in early years is effective. The statutory welfare requirements are in place and met properly.



## School details

Unique reference number	106640
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10042150

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Janvier
Head of School	Joanne Wray
Executive Headteacher	Damien Thorpe
Telephone number	01226 742172
Website	<a href="http://www.federationcc.org.uk">www.federationcc.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:d.thorpe@federationcc.org.uk">d.thorpe@federationcc.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	16–17 February 2016

## Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- A lower than average proportion of pupils is disadvantaged.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is above average.
- Children start at the school in Reception on a full-time basis.
- The year groups are arranged into five mixed-age classes.
- The school is federated with two other primary schools, St Michael's Catholic Primary School and Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, also situated in Barnsley. The three

schools share an executive headteacher and have their own head of school in post.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in a range of lessons and from work in pupils' books.
- The inspector observed and spoke with pupils during lessons and at breaktime. She also met formally with a group of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6.
- The inspector observed an assembly.
- The inspector listened to Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, including leaders from across the federation. Meetings also took place with members of the governing body, and a representative from the diocese. A telephone call discussion was held with a representative from the local authority. The inspector also analysed reports from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work and a range of documents, including the school's arrangements for safeguarding, performance management procedures, and pupils' behaviour and attendance data. The inspector also looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment.
- The inspector considered the views of parents to whom she spoke when parents brought their children to school and through the 15 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. She also considered the views of parents shared in the school's parent surveys.

## Inspection team

Fiona McNally, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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