

The Cathedral School of St Peter and St John RC Primary

Mount Street, Salford, Greater Manchester M3 6LU

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

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

- Though progress is improving, it still varies too much in writing across the school and in mathematics in key stage 2.
- New assessment and tracking systems do not yet contribute effectively to securing consistently strong progress.
- The progress of current pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, though improving is not consistent enough across all year groups. Leaders have appropriate strategies in place, but they do not yet maximise the impact of the extra funding.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils' progress is variable.
- In some year groups, teachers do not consistently plan lessons that interest pupils and keep them engaged in their work.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics do not have a clear view of strengths and actions needed to develop their subject.
- Some teachers do not provide challenging work for the most able pupils. Proportions of pupils reaching higher standards are still typically below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' rates of absence and persistent absence are above the national averages.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has quickly put appropriate strategies in place to improve teaching and strengthen the quality of leadership.
- Leaders' actions have already had a positive effect on improving pupils' skills in reading, with almost all year groups making strong progress.
- Governors challenge and support leaders well to ensure that they secure improvement.
- The large majority of pupils behave well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Children in the early years make strong progress from their starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics develop a clearer understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in their subjects
 - securing consistently stronger progress for disadvantaged pupils by making the most effective use of the pupil premium funding
 - making sure leaders maximise their use of the extra funding for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to ensure that they make consistently stronger progress.
- Ensure that there is consistently strong progress across all year groups and subjects by:
 - building on the successful strategies that have produced improved achievement in reading
 - making sure that pupils make rapid progress in mathematics and writing by the rigorous application of recently introduced strategies
 - securing stronger acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills across a wide range of subjects other than English and mathematics
 - providing the most able pupils with challenging work more regularly
 - making sure that teachers more consistently provide suitably demanding work that sustains pupils' interest.
- Further reduce rates of pupils' absence and persistent absence so that they come close to the national averages.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There has been substantial turbulence in the leadership and staffing of the school over the past two years. This has played its part in the inconsistency in pupils' achievement, especially by the end of key stage 2, since 2016. At various times, leaders have had to show tenacity and strength to challenge underperformance. The headteacher, who is coming to the end of her second full academic year in post, is under no illusions about what the school needs to do to restore acceptable standards. She is clear-headed and resolute. She has put appropriate actions in place to improve teaching and strengthen the quality of leadership. Her staff team shares her vision and determination. Her honest and accurate evaluation of the quality of education in the school recognises that, though progress is improving, it still varies too much across subjects and year groups.
- Senior leaders have created a suitable action plan for improvement, which pinpoints the key areas for development, namely reading, writing and mathematics. The actions they have identified are appropriate and well structured. They have already had a positive effect on improving pupils' skill in reading, with almost all year groups making strong progress. In writing and mathematics, however, there is still too much variation in the proportions of pupils making strong enough progress.
- There are now more thorough assessment systems in place. Pupils understand what skills they need to acquire in, for example, writing because teachers now give them this information more clearly. Senior leaders hold meetings with staff every term to check on pupils' progress. They also use their tracking system to analyse assessment information in greater detail. These systems are still relatively new and require time to become better established to maximise their contribution to securing consistently strong progress.
- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities (SENCo) is shared by a previous holder of the post and a member of staff who is new to the role. They are in the process of sharpening their overview of the support they provide for this group. They are clear about the needs of their pupils, which are increasing in their range, and use the funding to provide a suitable variety of support activities and resources. However, the progress of current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, though improving, is not yet consistent enough across year groups.
- Leaders of mathematics and English have a secure understanding of standards in their subjects and recognise the need for rapid improvement. They have introduced a range of measures to accomplish this. Those targeted on reading, such as promoting reading for pleasure and sharper assessment of reading skills, have had a positive impact on progress for most pupils. Although strategies for improving achievement in writing and mathematics are beginning to bring about improved progress, leaders recognise that this progress is not strong enough in some year groups.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics work enthusiastically in teams to ensure that pupils have an increasing understanding of the skills needed for each subject. This a recent arrangement to encourage a more shared approach to

leadership. They are developing a more refined assessment and tracking system to give them an improved overview of standards. However, they currently do not have a sharp enough appreciation of the strengths and next steps for development in the majority of subjects.

- Leaders have a detailed structure and a clear purpose for the use of the pupil premium funding. For example, they provide support for disadvantaged pupils in developing their key skills in English and mathematics and they employ staff to look after pupils' emotional needs where required. While there is evidence of strong progress in most year groups in reading, progress in writing and mathematics, though improving, is still inconsistent.
- Staff are positive about the school and value the training leaders provide. This includes formal courses and opportunities to have highly skilled teachers working alongside them. The training helps them towards meeting their individual performance targets and contributes effectively to the improving quality of teaching. Staff also feel that leaders do all they can to manage their workload, for example by reducing the school's requirements around the planning of teaching.
- Leaders make effective use of the physical education and sport premium for primary schools. They buy the services of expert coaches to support teachers' knowledge and skills. They provide a range of extra-curricular sporting activities and involve pupils in competitions in collaboration with the local high school. The school has held the Sports Gold Award for the past four years and is now seeking to achieve the more prestigious Platinum Award.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and they provide effectively for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also promote fundamental British values well. They base the curriculum on 'key drivers', or characteristics they feel pupils should develop to improve their learning, such as curiosity. There are opportunities for pupils to attend exciting clubs, such as water polo, skiing and ukulele. Leaders develop pupils' understanding of other faiths through, for example, lessons in religious education. Pupils understand democracy through elections to the school council, with candidates writing their own manifestos to persuade pupils to vote for them. Leaders also support pupils' mental health effectively with a programme that develops their sense of self-worth and their understanding of how to manage their emotions.
- The local authority and the diocese provide appropriate support in response to the school's recent decline in performance. Advisers are clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and make regular visits to keep a check on developments. They report accurately on the quality of education the school provides, making helpful suggestions for strategies to support improvement. The diocese is in the process of arranging help from a specialist leader of education and a national leader of education to secure stronger pupils' progress and to support leaders at all levels.
- Some parents and carers who spoke to inspectors felt their children do not make good progress in the school. Others, however, including a large majority of parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, are happy with the quality of education the school provides. They feel that teachers keep pupils safe. Almost all parents responded that they would recommend the school to another parent.

Governance of the school

- Governors are well trained and knowledgeable about safeguarding. They keep themselves up to date with safeguarding issues in the school by, for example, scrutinising regular reports from the headteacher. There is also a governor who holds frequent meetings with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss any issues and keep a check on the effectiveness of procedures.
- Governors are fully aware of the strengths and areas for development of the school. They challenge and support leaders well to ensure that they secure improvement. They ask pertinent questions on matters such as finance and pupils' progress and are determined to see rapid improvement in the quality of education in the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Records of safeguarding concerns are well organised and detailed. The designated safeguarding lead makes referrals to external agencies when required and follows up issues if necessary.
- The required checks the school carries out on members of staff are thorough and comply with government guidance.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders train staff well so they know how to be alert to signs of abuse and to issues concerned with, for example, radicalisation. They have also provided extra training on safeguarding issues specific to the local area. Staff have a secure knowledge of the school's reporting procedures if they have concerns about pupils' well-being. Leaders ensure that pupils are safe online by providing lessons and presentations on e-safety. They also hold workshops for parents to give them relevant information about keeping their child safe on the internet.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment, though improving in quality as a result of leaders' actions, do not currently secure strong progress for pupils across some year groups or a range of subjects, especially in writing and mathematics. The progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and of pupils who are disadvantaged is also inconsistent. However, teaching is more effective in reading, where most current pupils make strong progress.
- Although teachers' subject knowledge is mostly secure, in some year groups teachers do not consistently plan lessons that interest pupils and keep them engaged in their work. This means that, particularly in writing and mathematics, current pupils do not acquire knowledge, understanding and skills rapidly enough. Sometimes, this results in a few pupils losing concentration and misbehaving, causing temporary disruption to the learning. However, teachers typically have effective strategies for managing these occurrences, which are not regular.
- There is inconsistency in the way teachers plan work to challenge pupils according to their ability. For example, in history in key stage 1, there was evidence in pupils' books

of limited acquisition of skills beyond understanding chronology. In writing and mathematics in key stage 2, teachers missed opportunities to challenge the most able pupils to think more deeply. As a result, progress across a range of subjects and year groups is variable.

- The application of skills pupils have learned in English and mathematics to other subjects varies across year groups. In key stage 2, for instance, pupils make effective use of their writing skills in creating newspaper articles in religious education or reports about investigations into light in science. In key stage 1, they use mathematical knowledge purposefully in geography. However, in history in upper key stage 2, for instance, there are few opportunities for using writing skills in a sustained way. In science in key stage 1, the standard of writing is not as strong as equivalent examples of work in English.
- The actions that leaders have taken to address the recent decline in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in English and mathematics, are beginning to have a positive impact. Where more effective teaching is evident, such as in reading in Year 6, teachers focus sharply on developing important skills like comprehension. This has resulted in a greater proportion reaching the expected standard than last year, with current pupils close to the national average. In writing and mathematics, there has been clear improvement this year, but this has not yet translated into a large enough number of pupils achieving as well as they should.
- In year groups and subjects where teaching is more effective, teachers ask questions in a way that encourages pupils to think for themselves and give more extended responses. They tackle pupils' misconceptions well, making effective use of technology to display information for this purpose. In all classes, teachers have appropriate strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging positive attitudes among most pupils.

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's Roman Catholic ethos has a strong influence and is evident in pupils' knowledge of values, such as compassion and kindness.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have all chosen a trusted adult in school, who is available if they have any fears or concerns. They know that visitors to school have to show some form of identification before they may enter the building. They understand how to keep themselves safe because staff and visiting speakers teach them about, for example, how to stay safe on the internet and road safety.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say their teachers usually work them hard and that tasks are rarely too easy. If they are, teachers give them more difficult work. They enjoy a variety of clubs, such as sports and dance, and visits to places such as the Lowry Theatre and gallery complex. Some pupils have had the opportunity to perform dance at this venue. These activities contribute effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Pupils know about different types of bullying, including racist and homophobic. They say bullying is rare, although pupils sometimes fall out with each other at breaktimes. They know that adults are effective in dealing with any issues that emerge and that they manage behaviour well.
- The majority of pupils are confident and willing to converse with trusted adults. They also have opportunities to develop their self-confidence and sense of responsibility through their roles as playground buddies or members of the school council.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes and understand how to be a successful learner, which contributes to the picture of gradually improving progress. However, a few pupils allow themselves to lose concentration at times, which slows their progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show good conduct around school. Pupils play sociably at breaktimes in a well-resourced playground. The school is typically an orderly place. There are some disruptions to learning, but these are infrequent and well managed.
- Pupils usually respond well to teachers' strategies for managing behaviour, complying quickly with requests or instructions from staff.
- Leaders have taken effective action to reduce rates of pupils' absence and persistent absence since 2016/2017. Their strategies include regular meetings and communication with parents of more reluctant attenders and involving the local authority's education welfare officer in visits to pupils' homes to speak to parents if necessary. However, both rates of absence are still above the national averages, although persistent absence is below the national average if pupils from the Traveller community are discounted from the figures.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2017, pupils performed poorly in tests in reading and mathematics in Year 6. Attainment was below the national average and progress was significantly below average. In writing, pupils' achievement improved compared to 2016, being close to the national average. Current pupils across key stage 2 make improving progress, particularly in reading, but it is still inconsistent across year groups and subjects.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 2 who reached the expected standard in reading and mathematics was close to the national average in 2017. In writing it was below. Assessment information and evidence from books show that current pupils across key stage 1 make strong progress in reading and mathematics, although progress in writing is less strong.
- In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils' progress is variable. In geography in upper key stage 2, for example, there is limited development of geographical knowledge and skills. By contrast, in science in key stage 1, pupils acquire knowledge and skills at a fast rate.
- Leaders have been swift to address the concerns about progress in English and

mathematics. They have, for instance, worked with parents on how to support their child's reading; they have introduced moderation of writing in more year groups, so that teachers have a clearer understanding of the skills expected of pupils; and they have put in place a new mathematics scheme, designed to make more connections between mathematical topics and help teachers to focus on identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge. There is evidence that progress in reading has improved considerably for most pupils. Progress in mathematics and writing is improving, although it is not yet consistently rapid enough across year groups.

- There is evidence to show that some pupils make strong progress. High proportions of pupils currently in Year 1, for example, are working at or have already achieved the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. In mathematics, for instance, they understand doubling and terms like 'inverse'. Some can count in steps of a half. Although there is evidence of challenging work for most-able pupils in this year group, in common with other year groups this is not always consistent. Proportions of pupils reaching higher standards are still typically below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most pupils read with fluency and understanding that match their ability and age. Least-able pupils use their knowledge of phonics effectively to read unfamiliar words. Most pupils enjoy reading and older pupils can talk about their favourite books and authors. A large proportion of pupils now achieve the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- The proportion of pupils who are ready for Year 3 by the end of key stage 1 is improving, especially in reading and mathematics. Evidence from current school assessment information and books shows that it is close to or above the national average for pupils in Year 2. At the end of key stage 2, however, most current pupils are only ready for Year 7 in reading, with smaller proportions working at the appropriate standard in writing and mathematics.

Early years provision

Good

- Children begin the early years with skills and knowledge that are below the levels typical for their age and stage of development. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development varies with the needs of each cohort. The most recent figure was above the national average. Around 60% of the current Reception Year show skills that indicate a good level of development. This represents good progress from their starting points. Typically, most children are ready for Year 1 by the end of the Reception Year.
- The early years lead took up the role in September 2017. She plans carefully for the needs of the children and has revised the assessment and tracking system to make it more precise in measuring children's progress. She influences the work of the rest of the staff team, ensuring that planning and provision are of the same high standard across the setting. She focuses particularly on identifying the increasing number of additional needs as early as possible and providing support, such as activities to aid children's development of speech and language. As a result of her actions, current children, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who are

disadvantaged, make strong progress from their starting points.

- Leaders effectively involve parents in their child's education. Transition arrangements into the early years are well organised. Parents have opportunities to become familiar with the school through open days before their child starts in Nursery, or Reception if appropriate. Staff carry out home visits as part of the process of preparing children to start in the early years. They make sure they keep parents up to date with their child's progress through formal reports. They also encourage parents to come into class with their children when they arrive in the morning, which affords an opportunity to talk about their child's development in an informal way.
- Children show they feel safe through their good behaviour and their willingness to engage with trusted adults. There are no breaches of the welfare requirements. Staff closely follow the safeguarding procedures and policies that apply to the whole school.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers plan interesting activities, both indoors and outdoors, that enable children to make strong progress in acquiring skills in a range of areas, such as physical development, language and mathematics. For example, during the inspection, a giant had left a terrible mess in the early years learning areas, which led to children eagerly using their writing and creative skills to make a 'wanted' poster for his capture.
- Staff often set demanding tasks and use effective questioning to encourage children to think hard about their work. Sometimes, however, staff miss opportunities to develop the skills of the most able by, for instance, asking more challenging questions, rather than simply responding to children's actions.

School details

Unique reference number	105964
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	10046065

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Iain Clarke
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Hanley
Telephone number	0161 834 4150
Website	www.cathedralschoolstpeterandjohn.com
Email address	linda.jordan@salford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2012

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Over half of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is higher than average.
- Over a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support for their SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans is above average.
- Over a third of the pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding, a higher than average proportion.

- A small proportion of pupils belong to the Traveller community.
- In 2017, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in all year groups. Some of these were joint observations with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher were also present at inspection team meetings.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school’s self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors had discussions with various stakeholders, including the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, other members of staff, the chair and another member of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, a representative of the diocese, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed pupils’ work in a range of subjects. They also looked at the work of children in the early years.
- The lead inspector evaluated 62 responses received through Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, during the inspection. There were no other survey responses.

Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector
Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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