

# St Stephen's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, A Voluntary Academy

Gargrave Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 1PJ

## Inspection dates

22–23 May 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Too many pupils, particularly in key stage 2, are not making the progress needed to reach the standards expected for their age. This is the case in English and mathematics and across the wider curriculum.
- The quality of teaching is improving but is still variable. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high. This leads to tasks which lack challenge and limit learning.
- Leaders have not insisted on all staff consistently applying policies, such as that for assessing pupils' work. Consequently, teachers do not always use assessment well enough to move pupils' learning on.
- Subject leadership is underdeveloped. English and mathematics leaders are starting to use their newly acquired skills to raise standards. Beyond English and mathematics, subject leaders have not had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders' plans do not contain precise enough success criteria to help them gauge the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes. This has hindered the rate of improvement.
- Leaders have a wealth of accurate information about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. However, they do not use this to inform performance targets for individual staff.

### The school has the following strengths

- After a period of considerable staffing change, new leadership arrangements are bringing about more rapid improvements.
- Leaders' actions to improve behaviour and attendance have been successful. Exclusions have reduced, and attendance improved to above the national average in 2016/17.
- Leaders have created a vigilant safeguarding culture.
- Phonics teaching is effective. Pupils quickly learn to read, and those who are behind are supported well to catch up.
- Relationships are positive. Pupils, including those who have complex social and emotional needs, are well cared for and supported.
- Children make good progress in the early years and the proportion reaching a good level of development is above the national average.

## Full report

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

- Improve consistency in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in key stage 2, so that progress continues to improve, by ensuring that:
  - teachers use assessment to plan activities which are precisely matched to what pupils know and can do so that gaps in learning are addressed and pupils are appropriately challenged
  - all staff have equally high expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - in mathematics, all pupils have regular opportunities for reasoning to deepen their understanding of the concepts they are learning
  - all pupils develop the resilience needed to become more independent in their learning
  - there are more opportunities for pupils to develop their reading comprehension skills
  - pupils, more regularly, produce sustained pieces of writing in English and across the wider curriculum.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - improvement plans include clearly identified measures of success related to outcomes for cohorts and groups of pupils
  - English and mathematics subject leaders continue to develop their effectiveness
  - subject leadership across the wider curriculum contributes more significantly to improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising of standards
  - suitable evidence is gathered to support assessments of children’s learning in the early years and is used to identify appropriate next steps for learning
  - performance management targets are linked more closely to individual teachers’ areas for development
  - pupils have access to a wide range of high-quality reading books, which inspire them to read regularly and develop a love of reading
  - school policies, such as for marking and feedback, are applied consistently and are having a good effect on pupils’ learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The school has been through a turbulent period. Significant staffing and leadership changes have hindered the pace of the school's improvement. Staffing is now settled, and new leadership arrangements are beginning to speed up the pace of change. Consequently, progress is beginning to quicken for current pupils.
- The executive headteacher has quickly implemented a range of systems and routines throughout school. These have been effective in addressing the dip in pupils' outcomes in 2017 and are bringing about more rapid improvements. However, there is still more to do to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are consistently good. Therefore, leadership and management require improvement.
- New systems are resulting in teachers taking more responsibility for the progress their pupils make. Leaders are increasingly involving teachers in monitoring pupils' progress, and this has led to more effective identification of pupils' needs. Actions taken are supporting pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, to begin to make better progress.
- Leaders gather a wealth of evidence about the strengths and weaknesses in teaching throughout school through their regular monitoring activities. This results in accurate self-evaluation. However, the information they glean is not linked to performance targets for individual staff. This has limited leaders' impact on improving consistency in the quality of teaching throughout school.
- English and mathematics leaders are new to their roles and so are in the early stages of developing their skills. They are beginning to make a greater contribution to improving teaching and raising standards. Leaders of other subjects do not have sufficient awareness of standards and progress in their areas of responsibility. This restricts them in ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is effective enough to achieve improved outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders' action plans often do not contain precise enough measures of success relating to outcomes for cohorts or groups of pupils. Consequently, the plans are not effective enough in securing and sustaining more rapid improvement.
- Leaders have made effective use of support available through the multi-academy trust. For example, teachers have moderated their assessment judgements with staff in other schools. This has led to more accurate assessment. Staff also feel well supported because of the training they receive and the opportunity to share good practice and learn from others.
- Leaders are committed to improving outcomes for vulnerable pupils. They have introduced active-learning sessions for pupils who need additional support to meet their social and emotional needs. This is beginning to improve pupils' readiness for learning and has reduced exclusions this year. Leaders have also made sure that additional support, for example, using additional teaching assistants, has been in place to minimise any disruption to other pupils.
- Leaders are keen to provide pupils with a curriculum that interests them and broadens

their experiences through visits and visitors. Consequently, pupils are usually enthusiastic about their learning in a range of subjects, beyond English and mathematics. However, the curriculum is not yet having sufficient impact on raising standards throughout school.

- The wider curriculum provides opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different faiths and values, such as tolerance and respect. Pupils can describe how the school's values are encouraged and celebrated. The school council contributes to pupils' understanding of being involved in whole-school decision making.
- Leaders have recently introduced a system for tracking the progress made by pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This is helping leaders to determine the impact of the SEN funding to support pupils' attainment and progress. Leaders have been particularly effective in providing support to meet pupils' social and emotional needs. This enables pupils to access learning more readily.
- Leaders have made sure that funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used effectively to support the needs of individual pupils. A personalised approach is used, as this group changes frequently, due to the high numbers of pupils leaving and joining the school.

### **Governance of the school**

- The multi-academy trust has put in place measures to bring about the necessary improvements to leadership and to ensure that these improvements are sustained. The new arrangement of a part-time executive headteacher has increased the pace of improvement.
- The new systems and procedures being introduced are supporting governors in holding school leaders to account more rigorously. Governors now have more detailed and increasingly accurate data. They also involve middle leaders to improve their accountability. They are visiting the school regularly to check the impact of leaders' actions and gain valuable knowledge about school improvement. External reviews of the school's effectiveness help governors to check the reliability and accuracy of leaders' information.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils are safe and protected from harm. The school works effectively with external agencies and with parents and carers to protect the most vulnerable pupils. Procedures for child protection are well established. Safeguarding records are kept meticulously and show the school's commitment to keeping pupils safe. Safeguarding leaders are knowledgeable about the needs of pupils. They are tenacious in making sure that safeguarding matters are followed up thoroughly.
- Training for safeguarding is recorded carefully and is part of the induction process for staff. Leaders also provide regular updates about safeguarding and, consequently, staff know what signs to look for and feel confident to report any cause for concern.

- Governors have been keen to overcome the difficulties which the school's site presents in terms of security. Continued improvements, including a high fence around the perimeter, have improved security and safety.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving but varies between subjects and year groups. Learning is not always sufficiently demanding because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, particularly in key stage 2. Sometimes teachers do not use assessment of pupils' learning to identify misconceptions or to move them on to more challenging activities quickly enough. This hinders pupils' learning.
- In mathematics, teachers demonstrate increasingly strong subject knowledge. They encourage pupils to use precise vocabulary when making explanations. This is supporting pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts. However, there are some missed opportunities to use reasoning tasks which challenge pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding further.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. Teachers make sure that books which pupils read are well matched to their phonics knowledge. This supports them in developing confidence and fluency in their reading. Pupils, including the many who are new to school, who are not on track and need to catch up are well supported by experienced teaching assistants.
- Scrutiny of pupils' books revealed that there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their reading comprehension skills. While reading comprehension is taught verbally, leaders acknowledge that pupils have too few opportunities to explain their answers in a written form and so consolidate their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills at the same time.
- Similarly, an analysis of current pupils' work shows infrequent opportunities to write at length, particularly in subjects other than English. This prevents pupils from using and applying the skills they have learned in English throughout the curriculum.
- Overall, pupils talked confidently about the progress they are making and their next learning steps. Teachers encourage them to have ideas and challenge each other. Consequently, pupils learn to justify their opinions effectively. However, this has not been applied consistently in all classes. Therefore, some pupils lack the resilience needed to have a go, and be prepared to make a mistake, to further their learning.
- Teachers are increasingly involving pupils in taking responsibility for their own learning. From Reception, pupils are expected to check their own work and make improvements. However, not all teachers apply the school's policy consistently. Where this is the case, pupils do not gain the skills they need to be independent in their learning, for example, by knowing how to use a dictionary to find the meaning of an unfamiliar word.
- Where teachers' subject knowledge is strong, questioning is used very effectively to check pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking further.

## Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff create a nurturing atmosphere, and relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils are polite and cooperate well with each other. They speak confidently to visitors and welcome them to their school. Pupils generally show positive behaviours to learning, particularly when teaching is pitched appropriately and challenges their thinking.
- Pupils are encouraged to contribute to school life, for example, through the school council and as Nursery helpers. As a result, pupils are developing a sense of responsibility. School council members are currently developing a gardening area and recognise that their next priority is to improve the range of equipment available at breaktimes.
- Pupils said that they feel safe and that staff deal with the rare incidents of bullying successfully.
- The curriculum is successful in giving pupils an awareness and understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Through the curriculum for religious education, assemblies and the school's focus on its core values, pupils learn how to get along with each other, manage relationships, deal with bullying and discuss tricky issues in a safe environment. For example, pupils recently debated whether guns should be legalised and whether people had a right to protect their own homes.
- Pupils who have complex social, emotional and mental health needs have individual risk assessments and are managed well by teaching assistants who enable them to integrate with their peers and participate in their learning. Additionally, the newly introduced active-learning sessions provide a purposeful and appropriate curriculum for pupils who are struggling to be ready for learning in class with their peers.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils fully understand the behaviour system and know what the expectations are for their behaviour. They said that the school's values help them know how to get along with others and be good people.
- Pupils recognise that a few pupils sometimes present challenging behaviour, but they feel that adults keep them safe and deal with any issues, making sure that any disruption to learning is minimised.
- Leaders have been tenacious in their actions to improve behaviour for vulnerable pupils who have considerable social and emotional needs. Consequently, there has been a reduction in the rate of exclusions and the number of pupils who have been repeatedly excluded.
- Attendance improved in 2016/17 and was above the national average. Persistent absence figures, while improving, remain above the national average due to the transient nature of this group. However, leaders' strategies to reduce the proportion of

pupils who are regularly absent are proving successful when pupils remain at the school.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In key stage 2, expectations are not always high enough, and variability in the quality of teaching remains. Consequently, some pupils are not being challenged well enough in their learning and this limits their progress.
- Having been broadly in line with the national average in 2016, key stage 1 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics dipped in 2017 to below the national average. Pupils did not make enough progress due to inconsistency in the quality of teaching in Year 2. These pupils are making better progress in Year 3, this year, but there is still some catching up to do because of their previous underachievement.
- Standards also dipped to just below the national average in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 in 2017. However, because of leaders' actions, progress in writing and mathematics is beginning to quicken for current pupils throughout school and particularly in the early years and key stage 1.
- By the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been consistently above the national average. Those who are not on track with their learning, including the many pupils who join the school throughout the school year, are well supported to catch up with their peers.
- Pupils' attainment in reading throughout the school is higher than it is in writing and mathematics. However, although pupils enjoy reading, the books in the school library areas do not interest them enough. This results in many pupils choosing books from home which are not always as challenging as they should be.
- Pupils' handwriting is developing well because of a whole-school approach, which is consistently applied in most cases. Pen licences encourage pupils to join their writing and present their work neatly.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils vary considerably, due in part to the transient nature of this group. However, intervention is proving particularly successful in developing pupils' reading and social and emotional skills.
- The standards which pupils reach across the wider curriculum, beyond English and mathematics, are not as high as they should be. This is because subject leaders have had a limited impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising standards in their areas of responsibility.

## Early years provision

## Good

- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the

early years, in 2016 and 2017, was above the national average. Children make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for their learning in Year 1.

- As a result of effective teaching and learning in Nursery, the children who moved into Reception this year had stronger starting points than has been typical before.
- Leaders identified that children in Nursery and Reception would benefit from mixing more frequently. Increased opportunities have now been created, and this is supporting children's transition from Nursery to Reception.
- Adults model effective language structures well, so that children, including those who speak English as an additional language, develop their speech and language skills effectively. Staff also prioritise children's social and emotional development. As a result, children work with confidence, independence and sustained concentration as they carry out purposeful tasks which help them to use and apply their newly acquired reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- In 2016 and 2017, achievement for boys was well below that of girls and the difference between their achievement was much wider than the difference seen nationally. Leaders' prompt action has resulted in staff planning activities which successfully spark the interest of boys. Projects which stimulate curiosity and take greater account of children's interests are creating more opportunities for boys to use their skills and consolidate their learning in a range of contexts. For example, boys accessing the snack area independently read instructions and then practised their money skills as they 'paid' for their snack. In the outdoor area, boys were counting and calculating as they moved objects from the water to a bucket. Leaders are now beginning to track the progress of different groups of pupils. This is helping them to check the impact of their improvement actions.
- Leaders are aware that, at present, teachers' assessment of children's learning is not always substantiated by enough evidence. Additionally, adults' observations of children's learning do not identify precise next steps for individuals. This limits staff in being able to accelerate the rate of children's progress.
- Staff have further developed parent partnership. They have been successful in sharing information and helping parents to understand how they can support their child's learning at home.
- Staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They ensure that children are well cared for and that the legal welfare requirements are met.
- Children behave well, are keen to follow adult instructions and display positive relationships with each other. Effective use of rewards reinforces children's understanding of the expectations for their behaviour. Children enjoy learning about how to get along with others and how to be good learners. They are eager to contribute their suggestions about the qualities which the 'special person of the day' exhibits.



## School details

Unique reference number	142023
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10048367

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Ms Janet Sheehan
Headteacher	Mr Tony Pye
Telephone number	01756 793787
Website	<a href="http://www.st-stephens.n-yorks.sch.uk">www.st-stephens.n-yorks.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@st-stephens.n-yorks.sch.uk">admin@st-stephens.n-yorks.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy as part of the Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust in August 2015. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate. Since the last inspection of the predecessor school in February 2014, there have been significant changes to staffing and leadership. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2016. A part-time executive headteacher has also been in post since November 2017.
- The local academy council oversees the running of the school on behalf of the board of trustees that ultimately governs the academy.
- The multi-academy trust provides a wide range of support to develop school leadership and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Termly quality-assurance reviews are also carried out by an external consultant in conjunction with other headteachers from within the multi-academy trust.

- The number of pupils leaving and joining the school throughout the year has been increasing and is now high.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to the national average.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- In 2016/17, the school met the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school. Most observations were undertaken jointly with either the headteacher or executive headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their experience of school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and a range of subject leaders. They met with six members of the academy council, including the chair and vice chair. A meeting also took place with the director of the trust and another trustee.
- Discussions took place with a group of teachers about the support and development they receive.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books along with the school's information on pupils' achievement to determine the progress that they are making.
- A range of documentation was considered. This included the school's self-evaluation, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information relating to the attendance and behaviour of pupils, safeguarding and child protection records, and minutes from academy council meetings. Documents outlining the arrangements for the use of pupil premium funding were also considered.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start and end of the school day in order to seek their views about the school. Inspectors also considered the 30 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The seven responses to the staff survey and the eight responses to the pupil survey were also considered.

## Inspection team

Kirsty Godfrey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lee Elliott

Her Majesty's Inspector

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