

# St Gregory's RC Primary School, Farnworth, Bolton

Presto Street, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 8AJ

## Inspection dates

24–25 April 2018

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Weak teaching results in too few pupils reaching the expected or higher standards at the end of key stages 1 and 2. The proportion reaching the expected standard fell further in 2017, apart from in key stage 2 reading.
- Senior leaders, middle leaders and governors have been too slow in securing improvement. They do not monitor the school's work closely enough. Their actions have not had enough impact on improving the quality of teaching or accelerating pupils' progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and the most able make slow progress as teaching in most classes is weak.
- The headteacher has been in post for almost two years. Other leaders are inexperienced or new to their roles. The school is overly reliant on external support and lacks the capacity to improve as rapidly as it needs to.
- Assessment systems, including in the early years, are insecure. As a result, teachers' expectations are too low and they do not intervene and adapt teaching quickly enough to prevent underachievement.
- The curriculum does not give pupils opportunities to do well in a range of subjects. Teaching does not develop subject-specific skills and knowledge well enough.
- Absence and persistent absence are well above average, including in the early years.
- While safeguarding is effective overall, not all staff have received training in the 'Prevent' duty.
- Governors are unclear about the progress and attendance of groups of pupils. They are unaware of how well the schools' performance compares to other schools nationally and so cannot hold leaders sharply to account for the use of pupil premium and SEN funding.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching has improved in Years 5 and 6. This is beginning to have a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics.
- Teachers across the school, including in the early years, develop good relationships with children that support them well in gaining confidence and independence.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Rapidly increase the proportion of pupils that reach the expected and higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2, by ensuring that:
  - teaching enables pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils for whom English is not their first language, to make accelerated progress, so that they catch up with all pupils nationally.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment across the school, including in the early years, in a wide range of subjects, by ensuring that:
  - teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement
  - teachers regularly intervene in learning and adapt teaching when necessary, so that pupils are helped to make strong progress across a wide range of subject areas
  - teachers accurately assess pupils' learning and set appropriately challenging work for all pupils, particularly the most able pupils, so that they are supported to reach the highest possible standards
  - teachers enable pupils to gain subject-specific skills and knowledge in a range of different subjects.
- Urgently improve leadership and management, by:
  - developing leadership, particularly that of subject leaders and SEN, so that leaders can accurately monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility and take swift action where these need to improve
  - developing a broad and interesting curriculum that supports pupils to make good progress in a wide range of subjects
  - improving governors' oversight of teaching, and the use of pupil premium and SEN funding so that they can rigorously hold school leaders to account for improving pupils' outcomes and attendance
  - ensuring that all staff have training in the 'Prevent' duty and are able to identify the early signs that may indicate that pupils are at risk of radicalisation.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
  - improving overall attendance and reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school, including in the early years.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- The school has experienced considerable turbulence in recent years, with many changes of senior leaders and teaching staff. The headteacher has been in post for almost two years. Other leaders are inexperienced or relatively new to their current roles in the school. Since the previous inspection in April 2016, leaders have not secured the necessary rapid and sustainable improvements in pupils' outcomes, pupils' attendance and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The slow improvement to the school indicates that leaders have not demonstrated proven capacity to bring about such improvement in the future.
- While senior leaders have accurately identified strategic priorities for the school and started to take action to address these, changes in approach, for example, to assessment and improving attendance, have not shown a measurable impact on outcomes.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are falling, and too many pupils are not well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is because leaders' actions to improve teaching have not been swift and decisive enough to ensure that pupils make strong progress in different subjects and in all year groups.
- Leaders' actions to address gaps in pupils' learning, particularly those of disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, are ineffective. Leaders' and teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve are not ambitious enough, which means that such pupils receive insufficient challenge.
- Leaders have not ensured that the most able pupils do well enough. The progress of the most able is weak, and has been so for a number of years, because the work provided for them is not suitably challenging.
- The leadership of SEN provision is not strategic enough. SEN funding is not being used effectively. While leaders have a good awareness of pupils' specific vulnerabilities and care for these pupils well, the school's own assessment arrangements for this group are imprecise. Pupils' books show that too few of these pupils make enough progress from their starting points.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding is ineffective because it is not sharply targeted on the needs of disadvantaged pupils with different levels of ability. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' outcomes are not rising rapidly and the differences between the achievement of this group and other pupils nationally are not closing consistently.
- The physical education and sport premium is used effectively to increase the range of sports on offer for pupils. Leaders employ sports coaches to work alongside staff in school and to support their professional development. Additionally, the investment of some of the funding to pay for swimming lessons ensures that the vast majority of pupils are competent swimmers by the end of key stage 2.
- Staff who completed the online survey feel positive about the school. They believe that

it is improving and they have confidence in school leaders. They work well together.

- Although the school's curriculum does allow for different subjects to be taught, there are weaknesses in how well it enables pupils to gain subject-specific skills and knowledge as they progress through the school. The emphasis on promoting pupils' literacy skills is at the expense of developing and deepening their understanding of key concepts, skills and ideas in subjects such as science, history and geography. Subject leaders have had too little influence in ensuring that pupils are able to achieve well across a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders provide a range of activities and experiences which enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including visiting different places of worship. Pupils learn to develop an awareness of fundamental British values, such as democracy, tolerance and respect, through assemblies and dedicated lessons on what it means to be a citizen in modern British society.
- Leaders have identified some barriers to pupils' learning, such as behavioural, emotional and social issues. Leaders' actions have improved some pupils' behaviour, as well as their confidence and self-esteem. Exclusions for poor behaviour have reduced.
- Leaders and governors have received external support from a range of sources, including the local authority, the diocese and another school within the local area. While this was effective in supporting the headteacher when she was first appointed, the range of advice from so many different sources detracts from her ability to determine the strategic direction of the school. An over-reliance on this external support limits the school's capacity for sustained improvement.
- Parents and carers speak positively about the school, although a few say that communication is not strong enough and would like to have more specific information on their children's progress.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors are loyal supporters of the school. However, they do not have the necessary skills to hold leaders to account for their actions in improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governors rely too heavily on the information provided for them by leaders. They are too quick to celebrate the changes leaders make before there is any evidence of a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Governors say that the exceptionally low outcomes from the 2017 statutory tests at the end of Year 6 were 'a total shock'. They now accept that the school needs to improve. However, governors do not understand just how weak the school's performance is in comparison with other schools nationally nor the urgency of the need to address this considerable shortcoming.
- Governors have not held the school to account for expenditure in relation to disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They have failed to ensure that the additional funding has a positive impact on the educational outcomes for these pupils. Similarly, governors are unaware of the attendance issues in relation to these pupils and have not challenged leaders about how they are tackling high

absence rates. As a result, attendance and persistent absence continue to be considerable barriers to pupils' learning and progress.

- Governors have undertaken an external review of governance. However, they did not use the information gained from this sufficiently well to ensure that their practice improved.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Policies and procedures to ensure pupils' safety, including employment checks, are up to date and rigorously followed. This means that leaders are able to assure themselves that staff are suitable to work with pupils.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that all midday supervisors understand what to do if they suspect that a pupil may be at risk of harm from radicalisation. Leaders recognise the need to address this as an urgent priority.
- The school site is well maintained. It provides a safe place where pupils can learn and play together.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Inadequate**

- Some teachers' poor planning and low expectations mean that pupils are not given the support that they need to achieve as well as they should. In geography and history, for example, there is little difference between the level of work pupils are expected to complete in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils' progress is poor.
- Too much teaching lacks challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. As a result, pupils sometimes spend too long doing tasks that are not sufficiently demanding and, as a result, do not move on in their learning as swiftly as they could. This hinders pupils reaching the standards that they are capable of reaching.
- Many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language, have considerable gaps in their learning. Teaching does not routinely help these pupils to make the rapid progress needed to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Although the teaching of phonics is improving, it is not strong enough to ensure that pupils' achievement in phonics improves to a level which ensures that they can access the key stage 2 curriculum. Consequently, pupils' progress in reading and writing across key stage 2 is less rapid than it should be, especially that of boys.
- Teachers do not consistently follow the school's feedback policy. This means that there are missed opportunities for pupils to develop a secure understanding of next steps for their learning and the things that they need to do to be successful.
- Teachers provide pupils with increasing opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills in other subjects. However, too frequently this is at the expense of pupils developing their subject-specific skills and understanding in subjects such as science, history and geography. As a result, pupils in several year groups make insufficient progress in these subjects.

- Teaching is generally stronger in upper key stage 2. In Year 5, pupils' work includes a high degree of challenge and their progress is more rapid than in any other year group across a wide range of subjects. In Year 6, pupils' progress in English and mathematics since the beginning of the autumn term is good. However, these pupils have large gaps in their learning as a result of weak teaching in previous years and too many pupils are struggling to reach age-related expectations by the time they move on to secondary school.
- Teachers form good relationships with pupils. Most pupils respect teachers and appreciate opportunities to work together in pairs or small groups. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils in Year 5 happily supported one another and this left the teacher free to work with other pupils who needed extra help.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Inadequate

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Leaders' and teachers' approaches do not ensure that pupils are well enough motivated to learn.
- While pupils say that they generally feel safe in school, there is some bullying, including homophobic name calling, and there are some incidents of boys fighting and swearing. Pupils say that staff listen to them and will always investigate their concerns and 'sort things out'.
- Pupils develop a sound understanding of British values. Pupils are aware of the need for rules and consequences and understand the importance of democracy in our society. Older pupils visit the local mosque and Hindu temple, and this supports them in understanding different faiths and cultures and recognising that there are many common shared values.
- Effective use of the physical education and sport premium funding means that pupils have increased access to a range of sporting activities and events, both during and after the school day. This supports pupils well in learning how to keep themselves fit and healthy.
- Leaders ensure that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe from harm, including when they are using the internet.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Pupils' poor attendance presents a serious barrier to their learning. Pupils' attendance is well below average and has declined over time. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is around one-and-a-half times the national average. Boys' attendance, that of disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, is exceptionally low.

- The school has recently appointed a learning mentor who is working hard with families to support them in bringing their children to school regularly and on time. However, it is too early to see a measurable impact from this work on reducing absence.
- Most pupils know how to behave and are keen to learn. However, when teaching does not meet pupils' needs, pupils become restless and there is low-level disruption to learning, such as chatting about things that are unrelated to work.
- While a minority of parents have concerns about inconsistent behaviour management, inspectors found that pupils mostly respect the school's behaviour rules. The incidence of poor behaviour and exclusions is reducing.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Inadequate

- Pupils' outcomes have declined significantly over time due to weak teaching. Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is inadequate overall. Pupils' progress is poor and too few pupils reach the expected standards at the end of each key stage, particularly key stage 2. Very few of the most able pupils attained the higher standards in the Year 6 national tests and assessments.
- The progress of pupils currently in the school continues to be too slow because leaders do not ensure that teachers consistently set work that is well matched to pupils' needs. Disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language do not make enough progress. Consequently, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected and higher standards set by the school for each year group remains low.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1, or when re-checked at the end of Year 2, is below average and has fallen over time. This limits the progress that pupils can make to become confident and skilful readers and weakens overall outcomes in reading as pupils move through the school.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is poor. This is due to weak teaching over time, leading to big gaps in pupils' learning. Better teaching in upper key stage 2 is helping to accelerate pupils' progress, but pupils in these year groups still have a lot of ground to cover in order to make a successful start at secondary school.
- Pupils' calculation skills in mathematics are improving. The deputy headteacher has introduced a school-wide focus on strengthening pupils' basic skills, for example, in using multiplication tables and understanding fractions. This is helping to give pupils a firm foundation for applying reasoning skills to solve more complex problems. However, there is still too much ground to make up for some pupils to reach the level of competency that they should have in mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' outcomes in subjects other than English and mathematics are weak. This is because the curriculum is not designed to support pupils in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history, geography and science. The level of challenge that pupils receive is not high enough.



## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Children enter the school with a wide range of abilities and an increasing proportion of them speak English as an additional language. A significant number of children have poor language and communication skills and limited personal and social development. This means that they sometimes find it hard to play with other children, share toys and communicate their needs to adults.
- The new early years leader is improving teaching, but assessments of children's abilities on entry to school are not always accurate and underestimate the number of children with middle or high levels of ability. This masks the true potential of these children and means that teachers' expectations of their progress in the Reception class are not high enough.
- Fewer children than nationally gain the good level of development needed to get off to a rapid start in Year 1.
- Teachers work well on focused activities with groups of children. However, they sometimes miss out on opportunities to enrich pupils' language development through taking part in children's play, building on their thoughts and ideas and extending their vocabulary.
- Teachers in the early years develop caring and supportive relationships with children. As a result, children feel safe and secure in school and most listen carefully and gain independence as confident, enthusiastic learners.
- Children's attendance in the Reception class is poor. A high proportion of children are persistently absent and this does not support their development of good attendance patterns as they move through the school.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust. They support children well in learning how to keep themselves from harm, for example through learning good hygiene routines and to behave sensibly as they move around the classroom.
- Leaders have secured funding to design and build a new outdoor play area later this year. The current area is adequate but some of the play equipment is worn, shabby and unstimulating for children.

## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 105244   |
| Local authority         | Bolton   |
| Inspection number       | 10045997 |

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                 | 4 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 198  |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Anne Bates   |
| Headteacher                         | Kelly Watson   |
| Telephone number                    | 01204332658  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.st-gregory's.bolton.sch.uk">www.st-gregory's.bolton.sch.uk</a>     |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:office@st-gregorys.bolton.sch.uk">office@st-gregorys.bolton.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 19–20 April 2016   |

## Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- An average proportion of pupils have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed from September 2016 and the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher from September 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in lessons and during school break times.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about the school and looked at a wide range of pupils' work, jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher, subject leaders, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority and a representative from the diocese. They also took account of 17 responses to the online staff survey and 25 responses to the online pupil survey.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View and a separate letter sent from a parent.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation of its current performance, the school's most recent information on the attainment and progress of pupils, information relating to the safeguarding of pupils, and the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils.

## Inspection team

Jan Corlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Tull

Ofsted Inspector

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