

# St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Stacksteads, Bacup

Huttock End Lane, Stacksteads, Bacup, Lancashire OL13 8LD

## Inspection dates

19–20 June 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</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	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has undergone a period of significant turbulence in staffing since the previous inspection. This, alongside an influx of pupils who arrive part way through their primary education, has contributed to a decline in the school's performance.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies between classes and subjects. Pupils do not make consistently good progress, particularly in key stage 2, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have declined over time. Pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills are underdeveloped.
- The quality of pupils' written work is not always as good as it should be. Some pupils do not have a good enough grasp of basic skills to write with fluency and accuracy.
- For some most-able pupils, work can be too easy, which limits their opportunities to reach greater depth by the end of key stage 1 and the higher standards by the end of key stage 2.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has been quick to address issues of underperformance, particularly in key stage 2. The most recent assessment information shows that more pupils are now on track to reach their expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils get off to a flying start in the early years. They are taught well, make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils behave well across the school because of the high quality of provision for their personal development.
- Attendance has improved due to the continued committed hard work with pupils and their families.
- The school provides high-quality sports provision, which enables pupils to experience a range of physical activities and memorable experiences.
- Governors are effective and have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide strong support and challenge for the school.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to raise standards of attainment and progress, particularly in key stage 2, by ensuring that:
  - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics
  - all teachers have a thorough understanding of the levels that pupils are capable of working at so that tasks set offer sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Raise standards in writing for all pupils, especially those in key stage 2, by:
  - making sure that all pupils further develop basic skills of handwriting, punctuation and spelling
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write extensively when learning in subjects other than English
  - making sure that pupils' work is always presented to the highest possible standard.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced a significant period of turbulence in staffing. There has also been an increase in the number of pupils who arrive part-way through their primary education. During this period, the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress have declined, particularly in key stage 2.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the governors and senior and middle leaders, has worked effectively to try to bring about the improvements needed. With support from advisors from Lancashire County Council, she and her leaders have taken helpful steps to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, the standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved.
- Staff and governors are highly ambitious for the school's success. There is a strong sense of pride in the school and staff morale is high.
- School leaders have well-defined plans in place for the actions that they are taking to raise standards. While these plans are showing signs of success, leaders are not complacent and understand that more needs to be done to accelerate progress further, particularly in mathematics and writing in key stage 2.
- Local authority advisors visit the school regularly to check on and support the progress that the school is making. School leaders and teachers act on the advice and support provided and, as a result, the quality of teaching is improving. School leaders provide clear support and feedback to teachers to help them to improve their practice.
- The school's investment in middle leadership development is paying dividends. Middle leaders make a significant contribution to improving the school. They are passionate and knowledgeable about their responsibilities and are having considerable impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Staff welcome the support provided by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. A middle leader described the school as 'one big family where everyone wants to do their best for our pupils'. All staff who completed Ofsted's online survey were very positive about the school.
- Leaders provide highly effective training and professional development for staff. While some training is common to all staff, school leaders plan other activities that are designed to meet the developmental needs of individuals. There has been considerable investment in training to help all members of staff to meet the rapidly changing needs of their pupils.
- The school maintains good records of pupils' progress, so leaders and teachers can identify those pupils who are at risk of falling behind their classmates. However, not all teachers routinely use this information to set challenging work for some of the most able pupils. Consequently, improvements in some aspects of the school's work have not been as effective as they need to be.
- Pupils who arrive part-way through their primary education, and their families, are given a warm welcome. The school establishes where they are in their learning and puts in place a comprehensive programme of support so that these pupils get off to a

flying start.

- School life is a hive of activity every day. The school's breakfast club is attended by large numbers of pupils and there are numerous clubs, extra classes and trips out. The learning environment provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to learn and to reflect upon their learning. Together, these, alongside the school's church links, contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making stronger progress than previously, which is helping them to diminish the difference with their peers in school and nationally. Leaders make good use of additional funding to help these pupils overcome their barriers to learning.
- The school makes good use of the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding so pupils develop their skills across a wide range of physical activities. Pupils' participation in sport is high. Staff have developed their own skills to enable them to deliver effective sports provision in school.
- The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the school's own survey, and those who spoke to inspectors, agreed or strongly agreed that the leadership and management of the school are good.

### **Governance of the school**

- The governing body has provided strong support and challenge for the headteacher, particularly during a time of significant change following the previous inspection. Governors have a detailed understanding of the school's performance and use this information to challenge and support leaders appropriately.
- Governors carry out their roles and responsibilities diligently. They make sure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is deployed effectively.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders and governors have developed a culture in which the safety and well-being of pupils are the responsibility of all staff.
- The school ensures that all staff receive regular training and briefings so that they know exactly what to do if they have a concern that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Leaders have established good working relationships with other professionals and can draw on this expertise when needed.

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

**Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent, particularly in key stage 2. Teachers do not always take account of pupils' starting points; as a result, some pupils do not make good progress.

- In some lessons, the level of challenge for the most able pupils is not pitched correctly. Consequently, too few of these pupils have the opportunity to achieve greater depth at the end of key stage 1 or the higher standards at the end of key stage 2.
- The teaching of mathematics has been weak over time. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to grasp the basic skills of mathematics, such as reasoning, to solve problems. Not enough pupils achieve the standard expected for their age in mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.
- The teaching of writing is not always effective. Pupils are not routinely provided with enough opportunities to practise and develop their writing skills across different subjects. They are not given regular opportunities to improve and extend the content of their writing. Handwriting is untidy and spelling and punctuation errors are common. Work in pupils' books shows that some teachers do not always challenge poor presentation.
- Most teachers explain clearly to pupils what it is they want them to learn. They ask questions that make pupils think, and this further develops pupils' skills and knowledge.
- Progress is stronger when teachers plan learning that pupils find engaging and challenging. As an example, in a Year 1/2 English lesson, pupils were encouraged to demonstrate their creative and descriptive language when evaluating robots. In this lesson, lower-ability and disadvantaged pupils were supported well and learned as much as their classmates. Also, in a Year 2/3 class, pupils' technical language and understanding of sedimentary fossils improved because the teacher had an accurate understanding of what each pupil was capable of.
- Phonics teaching has improved following a period where phonics standards were low. Pupils use their phonic skills effectively to break down unfamiliar words to help with their reading. As a result, a greater proportion of pupils reach the required standard in the phonics check in Year 1.
- The deployment of teaching assistants is effective. They support pupils well, including those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Pupils are benefiting from a whole-school focus on reading. Leaders ensure that pupils can access books which interest and engage them. Pupils spoke confidently about the books and authors that they find interesting. More pupils than in recent years are reading with confidence, fluency and expression. The school is working hard with pupils and parents to instil an interest of reading at home as well as in school.
- Relationships between pupils and staff create a good climate for learning. Pupils work well together because of their good personal development. Where adults have clear and high expectations, pupils respond well to them.

**Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. All adults clearly care for pupils and want the best for them. The school has a bright and stimulating learning environment, both inside the building and in the grounds. Most classrooms have useful displays that support pupils in their learning. The playground has a wealth of equipment and games that encourage pupils to be active.
- New pupils, whether joining in the early years or further up the school, are quickly made to feel part of the school family. The school works very effectively to make sure that all pupils settle in quickly.
- Some pupils who join the school have experienced interruptions to their education. The expertise of all adults in the school, coupled with the support of specialists, means that these children get the support that they need.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they know how to keep themselves safe. They explained that there is very little bullying but are confident that were it to occur adults would listen to them and take their concerns seriously. They are very aware of the need to stay safe when using modern technology.
- Pupils are friendly, helpful and get on very well together. They listen to each other and show respect for the views and feelings of others. They are polite and courteous, which creates a sense of harmony within the school.
- The school's use of the primary PE and sport funding is very effective in providing a wide range of physical activities for pupils. Pupils particularly enjoy the variety of activities that help keep them fit and healthy. The school's lunchtime running club is popular and pupils enjoy competing against pupils in other schools.

**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Instances of poor or inappropriate behaviour in classrooms and around the school are rare. Almost all pupils are keen to learn. Pupils move around the school sensibly, showing courtesy and respect for adults and each other.
- Leaders know pupils well and provide effective support for those with identified social, emotional and behavioural needs. Leaders work well with outside agencies to seek specialist advice. They use this advice effectively to meet the needs of individuals.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the school's own survey or who spoke to inspectors agreed or strongly agreed that their children were happy and safe in school, and that they were well looked after.
- Leaders are determined in their approach to improving attendance and reducing the numbers of pupils who are absent too often. The school ensures that absence is followed up every day by using 'first day calling' and, when necessary, home visits. The well-attended breakfast club encourages pupils to come to school.
- Reward systems recognise good attendance and the school has built strong

relationships with families to tackle poor attendance. Pupils' attendance has improved and is close to average. The proportion of pupils whose learning suffers through persistently low attendance is reducing.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- At the end of Year 6 in 2017, pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics were below the national averages and very few pupils reached the higher standard in these subjects.
- Because of the actions taken by school leaders, there have been some improvements in reading and writing. Current performance information and work seen in pupils' books suggest that a higher proportion of pupils are on track to reach the expected standard than in previous years. However, work in pupils' books shows that some pupils are still not reaching the expected standard in mathematics and that their progress is too slow.
- In some classes, pupils' work is untidy and not enough care and attention is given to good handwriting. Some pupils in key stage 2 do not have a secure grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Because of leaders' work to encourage reading across the school, standards have risen. Consequently, a higher proportion of pupils are on course to reach the expected standard this year.
- Leaders have put in place whole-school strategies to improve the teaching of phonics. Consequently, phonics results have improved, and pupils make a good start to learning to read. By Year 6, pupils enjoy reading and talk enthusiastically about the books that they choose. They read fluently and confidently.
- In mathematics, improved teaching means that some pupils have gained confidence in manipulating numbers and carrying out calculations. However, there remain inconsistencies in the progress that pupils make, especially for those who are most able. This is largely because pupils are not given enough opportunities to use reasoning skills to solve mathematical problems.
- Historically, disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities have made poor progress. However, leaders are making much better use of funding to provide bespoke programmes of work to help these pupils to catch up with their classmates. Although they still lag behind other pupils in the progress that they make, the differences in the amount of progress that they make are reducing.
- Although pupils study a wide range of subjects, not all teachers plan learning that builds systematically on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Expectations of what pupils write in their books in subjects other than English are not high enough.

## Early years provision

## Good

- Children enter the Nursery class with weak skills in several areas of learning, including speech, language and communication. They make good progress and by the end of their Reception Year in 2017, a well above average proportion attained a good level of development. Pupils in the early years are prepared well for the next stage of their

learning in Year 1.

- This year, all groups of children, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged children, are making good progress in all areas of learning.
- Outdoor provision is stimulating. Children can practise their balancing skills, engage in construction activities, explore the properties of various liquids and engage in role play.
- Children behave sensibly and safely at all times. They take great care when racing their wheeled toys outdoors, follow instructions well and enjoy cooperating and learning with their peers.
- Teachers make learning interesting. During the inspection, the learning theme was transportation, a topic chosen by the children. The theme of movement and transport was supported outside when children worked together to construct bridges made from train tracks, and in the classroom, where they enjoyed drawing racing cars, aeroplanes and boats.
- Teachers have very high expectations of what children can achieve; they praise them highly and encourage them to try their best.
- Children are familiar with the school's phonics routines. Older children enjoy learning new sounds and words and practising their writing skills. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for children to develop their writing skills fully.
- Staff focus on developing children into independent learners. This was evident during snack time, when children demonstrated their good dining etiquette. As they helped themselves to fruit, crackers and drinks, they were happy to talk about 'things that go'.
- Staff are trained well and have a good understanding of how young children learn. They are especially skilled at developing children's language and communication skills. Small-group teaching activities help children who find it difficult to communicate their ideas.
- Staff share information about children's learning with parents. In turn, parents are asked to complete 'wow' cards, which chart children's learning and development at home. Parents photograph children engaged in various activities with the class bear and note down their children's activities.
- Parents are very complimentary about the early years provision. They appreciate the school's 'open door' policy and opportunities to come into school to find out what their children are learning.
- Staff regularly monitor children's progress. They collect information relating to children's development across all areas of learning. This information is used well to plan activities which are tailored to children's individual skills and abilities.
- Safeguarding is effective. The procedures in operation in key stages 1 and 2 are adhered to in the early years, as well as welfare requirements specific to early years settings.



## School details

Unique reference number	119661
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10045928

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anthony Gallagher
Headteacher	Lynn Elder
Telephone number	01706 873177
Website	<a href="http://www.stjosephsbacup.co.uk">www.stjosephsbacup.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@st-josephs-bacup.lancs.sch.uk">head@st-josephs-bacup.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	1–2 July 2014

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has seen a significant increase in the numbers of pupils who arrive part-way through their primary education.
- The school has found it increasingly difficult to recruit to key posts.
- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The school has a much smaller-than-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2017, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, the leader for SEN and/or disabilities and four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils to discuss many aspects of school life and to talk about how they are encouraged to read more frequently.
- Inspectors heard a range of pupils read from across different year groups.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school website and a range of school documents, including: assessment information; attendance and behaviour records; the school's own evaluation of its performance; and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered the 22 responses to the school's own parent survey. They also spoke to some parents before school.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Gary Kelly, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lenford White

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2018