

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary School

Lock Lane, Partington, Manchester M31 4PJ

Inspection dates

18–19 September 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The executive headteacher, who took up post in January 2018, has transformed the school.
- Governors are now making a valuable contribution. Since the last inspection, the local authority has increased its support for the school, and this has been most effective in the last 12 months.
- Pupils who were once unhappy in school now say that they love it. The support for pupils' welfare has improved significantly. This critical change has underpinned the improvements that have been made across the school. Pupils now trust staff and feel well cared for.
- Some aspects of pupils' behaviour are very strong.
- The quality of teaching is improving rapidly. Alongside improvements in pupils' attitudes to learning, this has led to pupils achieving significantly better outcomes.
- The headteacher has created a highly positive and optimistic culture throughout the school. Staff work well as a team and are determined to ensure that the school keeps improving.
- Staff are supported well through high-quality training. This has made a strong contribution to improved teaching, learning and assessment.
- Although leaders are relatively new in post, the impact that they have had on the school is clearly evident.
- Leaders have maintained the aspects of the school that have been strong for many years, most notably in the early years, while rapidly improving the features that were weak.
- Pupils' achievements in both reading and writing showed considerable improvement in 2018, and were also good. Achievement in mathematics also improved, but not as significantly as in English.
- School leaders are undertaking a review of the curriculum across the whole school. They have already modified the content of the mathematics curriculum, which has brought immediate improvements. The curriculums that pupils follow for subjects other than mathematics and English are not as strong.
- Leadership of the early years has been strong for some time, and the provision is securely good. From low starting points, children develop quickly and are well prepared for Year 1. Children are well cared for, and they make good progress. They are happy and behave well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the rapidly improving quality of leadership throughout the school, to ensure that the school continues to flourish and that pupils' achievement continues to rise.
- Further develop the curriculum so that pupils learn as well in all subjects as they do in English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Parents, pupils and those staff with a long association with the school all describe a decline in the quality of education and care that took place after the last inspection. At that time, school leaders did not act decisively to improve the school quickly. Pupils say that they were frightened in the playground because behaviour was poor. They also describe poor relationships between themselves and some adults in the school.
- With the excellent leadership of the temporary executive headteacher, strongly supported by other key leaders, this school has undergone rapid, extensive and sustainable improvement. Throughout last year, only one pupil left this school because they were unhappy. Over the previous three years, 17 pupils left because they were unhappy. This reflects the breadth of the improvements introduced by leaders.
- In a remarkably short period of time, the executive headteacher has transformed the culture of the school. He has inspired the staff and made them believe in themselves. Staff now recognise that they have the skills and expertise to provide pupils with the quality of education that they deserve. Many staff responded quickly to the change in leadership, and this has led to significant improvements to teaching, support for pupils' personal development and outcomes. Pupils have also responded positively to this sea change in the school's culture. They have improved their behaviour and demonstrate a greater commitment to attending school regularly and working hard.
- The executive headteacher has systematically developed the skills of leaders within school. This is to ensure that the school can continue to develop once his involvement with the school becomes less direct. The leadership team has been strengthened with the appointment of new leaders from different schools and the promotion of staff from within the school. These appointments have had a demonstrable impact on improving different aspects of the school's work. For example, support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is improving rapidly. As a result, the strengthened leadership team, the governors and the headteacher have ensured that the school is in a strong position to build on the improvements that have already been made.
- Leaders have clearly identified the responsibilities of individual staff members. Staff fully understand how they will be held to account. Leaders also provide very good support for staff. This support takes many forms, including high-quality professional development. However, the most effective support that staff have received recently is from each other. Staff say that there is now a highly positive culture of mutual support and guidance. This is contributing to improving confidence and self-belief across all members of staff. Teachers are being encouraged to ask themselves, and to discuss with others, some searching questions about what they want their pupils to achieve both academically and in terms of their personal development. Leaders are challenging teachers to review how effectively they teach and what they need to do to improve. Teachers are responding very positively to this increased expectation of their professionalism.
- School leaders have started to evaluate the impact of the school's curriculum on pupils' personal development and academic outcomes. They have recognised that the

curriculum supports pupils to read well and to make good progress from Nursery to the end of key stage 1. Leaders have also worked with teachers to plan the school's future curriculum. Staff are keen to improve pupils' personal development and leadership skills. In particular, they want to increase the range of opportunities to develop pupils' mental health, their self-confidence and their cultural understanding. They are also keen to ensure that pupils benefit from a broader and richer curriculum in subjects beyond English and mathematics. Although leaders have a clear rationale for the enhancements that they have made to the curriculum, the changes are in the early stages of their implementation, and therefore it is too soon to judge their impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very strong. Pupils have high expectations of how they, and others, should behave. Over the last two terms, pupils have been given opportunities to express their opinions and have been encouraged to voice when they think things are not good enough. Pupils in this school always knew right from wrong, but now they have the confidence in staff to put things right. Pupils' cultural development is not as strong, because they have not experienced the rich breadth of opportunities that they need to gain a deep understanding of their own culture and the cultures of others.
- The school receives a range of additional funding to support elements of the curriculum and the achievement of some pupils. This funding is spent wisely by the school and leaders can account for the impact it is having on pupils' outcomes. The pupil premium is supporting disadvantaged pupils to achieve well across the curriculum. In some phases, disadvantaged pupils achieve very well. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are receiving tailored support based on accurate assessments of their needs. Teachers and teaching assistants are quickly developing a good understanding of how to best support individual pupils. The physical education (PE) and sports premium supports and enhances a wide range of activities. Three days a week, a sports coach runs a lunchtime club. In addition, a sports coach leads PE lessons, supported by the class teacher, to develop the teacher's skills in this subject.
- The rapid improvements to the school had a positive impact on pupils who left to start at secondary school in September. The standards that they achieved by the end of Year 6 were broadly in line with the national average, and they left with particularly strong reading skills. They had also improved their behaviour, their attitudes to learning and their commitment to attending regularly. The school has improved the quality of guidance that pupils and parents receive in preparation for making the transition to secondary school.
- Current Year 6 pupils were very articulate and enthusiastic when describing the recent improvements to the school. Almost all parents who responded to Parent View or texted their comments to the inspection team highlighted recent and significant improvements at the school. One parent wrote, 'The leadership team and teaching at the school have improved immensely.' This was typical of a large proportion of comments. When talking to parents bringing their children to school, parents told inspectors that they were much more confident in talking to the school about their children's learning or about concerns that they may have. They say that concerns are now acted on. The school has recently improved its website. It is attractive, and information is easy to find. Parents say that they have many opportunities to speak

with staff and that they can readily access information they require about the school.

- The school has received additional external support from the local authority for some time. Initially this had limited effect on improving the school. However, the local authority was instrumental in helping the governing body to challenge the quality of leadership. It also helped to secure the appointment of the current temporary executive headteacher.

Governance of the school

- As a mark of their integrity and honesty, governors said that they have to take some responsibility for the decline that the school experienced after the last inspection. They said that they were 'gullible' in accepting, with little effective challenge, what leaders at that time were saying about the quality of the school.
- However, they did begin, about 12 months ago, to work closely and effectively with the local authority and diocese to rapidly improve leadership.
- The experience that governors have gained through their realisation that the school was not as good as they thought it was, and their role in its subsequent improvement, has considerably improved their capacity to oversee the school's work effectively.
- There is no doubt that governors are passionate about providing high-quality education for their community. They now know how to oversee the school's work effectively. They understand how to challenge school leaders as well as to support them. They know how to engage with other agencies and have a much clearer understanding of their role.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Current staff and governors are resolute in ensuring that all pupils are safe, happy and healthy. Relationships between staff and pupils are now very positive. Pupils have quickly begun to trust staff. They confide in staff if they have any concerns about themselves or other pupils. The open culture around the school is healthy and helps to ensure that pupils are safe.
- Safeguarding training is of good quality, and is up-to-date and frequent. All staff know with confidence when and with whom they should raise concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil.
- The designated leader of safeguarding manages procedures and processes very well. Record-keeping is detailed and informative. There are good systems in place to ensure that actions are completed effectively and on time, including those undertaken by other agencies.
- The headteacher is determined to ensure that children do not go missing from education. Staff are diligent in ensuring that any pupils who leave the school are safe. They ensure that pupils who transfer to another school actually attend that school. They also ensure that the appropriate authorities are aware when a pupil leaves the country or leaves the school without an appropriate destination. Staff are also conscientious in following up pupil absence. They are proactive in ensuring that pupils

who are absent from school are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching across the school is much stronger now than it was 12 months ago, particularly in key stage 2. The headteacher has led high-quality and very professional discussions with the staff about the best way to teach the pupils of Our Lady of Lourdes. This has led to a school-wide understanding of the best ways to improve teaching. Expectations of what staff think pupils should achieve are now much higher.
- One of the most powerful developments has been the school's drive to improve pupils' vocabulary and their ability to express their ideas. This has enabled pupils to talk about what they are learning in more detail and with greater confidence. The discussion that pupils have on different topics helps them to clarify their thoughts and correct any misconceptions. This development has raised attainment and has made pupils more engaged in their learning.
- Pupils are enthused by the interesting topics and activities that teachers provide for them. This motivates pupils to work hard and to learn well. Little time is wasted because teaching and learning activities are very well organised. Teachers use questioning well, skilfully pitching the level of questioning to meet pupils' different needs. This encourages pupils to think deeply and develop their ability to explain their ideas and opinions.
- All staff quickly develop a very clear understanding about the strengths of their pupils and how best to support them to ensure that they move on quickly. Teaching assistants play an important role in supporting all pupils. Well managed by the teacher, teaching assistants are just as adept at working with individuals as they are with small groups. They are also skilled at helping pupils of all abilities, including the most and least able.
- Reading is well taught throughout the school. Staff in the early years establish very good foundations with their teaching of phonics. Teachers continue this good work through Years 1 and 2. Teachers in key stage 2 continue to promote the development of high-quality skills in reading. They also try to develop in pupils a love of reading, by ensuring that they read widely and have opportunities to talk about what they have read.
- The teaching of writing has not been as strong as the teaching of reading in the past. However, the support that pupils receive to develop their writing has improved greatly. Staff are now much more systematic in the way that they help pupils to build their writing skills. Teachers' and teaching assistants' rapidly expanding knowledge of pupils' strengths and weaknesses enable them to give precise advice, which helps pupils to write in depth and with fluency.
- In the past, the teaching of mathematics was weak. Teachers did not ensure that pupils were adequately covering the curriculum. This resulted in pupils lacking skills, and, in particular, lacking skills in reasoning and problem-solving. It is evident from the work of pupils currently in the school that teachers have responded decisively to these weaknesses. Pupils are now showing that they are as skilled in these aspects of

mathematics as others. Teachers have therefore strengthened the teaching of mathematics in a manner that is compensating for historic weaknesses in the delivery of this subject.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding, and this is the aspect of the school that has seen the most radical improvement.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 describe how unhappy they once were in school. They say that bullying was rife and that they felt intimidated. They describe poor relationships between pupils and some staff. These pupils also say that the current headteacher has altered the culture of the school beyond recognition.
- The playground is now a happy and harmonious environment where pupils of all ages mix, play together and feel secure. Pupils understand what bullying is and how it can affect people. They said that there is now little evidence of bullying because staff deal with the earliest signs of it very effectively.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are now excellent. They are built on the basis of trust and mutual respect.
- The school has added considerably to the work it does to promote pupils' physical and mental health. Staff encourage pupils to be active when on their breaktimes and lunchtimes. There are organised activities at lunchtimes for pupils to let off steam, and many opportunities for them to just play and have fun. Pupils are now learning about their mental health. For example, pupils in Year 5 are learning about how their brains work and how this affects how they are feeling. They are also learning to understand their emotions and how to manage them.
- Pupils are taught well about how to be safe beyond their school, while out and about in their communities and when using social media or computers online.
- The highly successful promotion of pupils' care and well-being is ensuring that pupils are now positive about their experience at school. They are keen and ready to learn.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around school is very strong. They move efficiently and with care around the tight corridors and stairs of the school.
- Pupils in Our Lady of Lourdes have always had a clear understanding of right and wrong. Recently, however, pupils have felt that they have the right and opportunity to speak up when they think that something is wrong. Pupils now trust staff to listen and try to understand their point of view. Additionally, the school is now much better at helping pupils who need support in managing their behaviour. These pupils are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and express their emotions. As a result, there has been a significant reduction in the number of behavioural incidents for these

pupils. Furthermore, they have been equipped with the skills to regulate their own behaviour and they now interact much more positively with others.

- Improvements to behaviour are also evident in pupils' learning. Pupils are taking more pride in their work and are engaging with learning activities much more enthusiastically. However, teachers, particularly in key stage 2, are still having to work hard with some pupils to ensure that they maintain concentration over long periods.
- The school has adopted very effective systems to reward good behaviour. Staff also ensure that the few pupils who do not manage their behaviour well enough know precisely what they need to do to improve.
- Attendance has been improving steadily over the past three years and it is now broadly in line with the national average. The school supports parents in a wide range of ways to help them to ensure that their children attend well. The school only addresses issues of high absence through punitive measures when a pupil's attendance remains poor over a long period and they are being unnecessarily disadvantaged by their absence. Pupils are punctual to school. When the bell goes to end breaktime or lunchtime, they line up quickly and demonstrate their readiness for their next lesson.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Over some time, teaching in key stage 1 has secured strong outcomes. However, pupils' progress has tended to falter in key stage 2, mainly due to weak teaching. Over the past year, however, pupils' achievement has become consistently good across key stages and in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The attainment of pupils in key stage 1 in 2018 improved across all subjects and was particularly strong in mathematics. Due to improved teaching and significant alterations to the curriculum, pupils' attainment in writing was much more positive than it had been in previous years.
- The attainment of pupils leaving key stage 2 in 2018 represented a significant improvement in English. Provisional data indicates that progress was stronger than that seen nationally in both reading and writing. While the attainment of pupils in mathematics improved in comparison to previous years, pupils did not make as much progress as they did in English. This was mainly due to historic weaknesses in the mathematics curriculum and to pupils not catching up on the weak progress that they had made. Teaching and the curriculum is now more effective in compensating for historic weaknesses in pupils' learning in mathematics.
- Last year the most able pupils also did very well in 2018, and many attained the high standards. These pupils responded to improved teaching and changes to the curriculum quickly and well.
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils made in English was similar to other pupils in the school and others nationally. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils did not perform as well as others in the school because they had been disproportionately affected by historic weaknesses in the teaching of mathematics. They were, therefore, starting from lower starting points and had more to catch up on.
- The support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has improved significantly. Teachers and teaching assistants provided highly effective support for these pupils in

Year 6 last year. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities made similar progress to others in the school, and all pupils nationally.

- The improvements to the quality of teaching and the curriculum are continuing to have a very positive effect on pupils currently in the school. Their progress is at least as strong as that of pupils in the past. In mathematics, their progress is undeniably stronger than previously.
- The school's successful strategies for improving achievement in English and mathematics are now being applied to other subjects. Achievement in other subjects, while not currently as strong as in the core subjects, is nevertheless positive. The staff are currently introducing changes to the curriculums for subjects such as history and geography to further strengthen pupils' learning in these areas.

Early years provision

Good

- On joining the school, children's starting points are generally below what is typical for their age. By the time children leave Reception, they have made good progress and many have caught up with their peers.
- Leaders make very good use of the additional funding that they receive to support disadvantaged children. These pupils make progress that is as strong as other children in the early years and better than disadvantaged children nationally, particularly in mathematics. Leaders have invested in additional training to help staff to improve the learning of disadvantaged children, particularly that of boys, and all children in mathematics.
- The outdoor area has been developed to support the wider improvements being made by leaders. For example, it contains lots of lively opportunities for children to understand numbers and early mathematical ideas.
- The quality of teaching in this phase of the school has been securely good for many years because it has been well led and managed. Leaders have a detailed knowledge of children's abilities and characteristics. Staff are also experienced and have a very good knowledge of how to help children to make good progress from their different starting points.
- Leaders ensure that both the indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced and attractive to children. They are stimulating environments. Learning activities are well planned and are prepared to ensure that children enjoy their learning and make consistent gains.
- Staff constantly monitor the children in their care. This helps them to assess how well they are learning and how happy the children are. They are skilled at helping children who do not seem their 'usual self'. This professional and enquiring approach helps to ensure that all children are safe and very well looked after.
- Staff help children to develop their language and thinking skills by asking very good questions. Attentive care and strong teaching promote children's personal development effectively.
- Parents said that they have very good relationships with staff and have confidence in them to look after their children. Many parents also said that they value the way that

the school encourages them to help their children to continue to learn well when not at school. Staff also maintain good relationships with other agencies that support children's welfare and learning.

- Children make good progress in the early years, even when they do not reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development, over time, is narrowly below national averages.
- Arrangements to help children make the transition from the early years phase into key stage 1 are effective. These include placing children in groups that contain a mixture of children from early years and Year 1 in the half term before they transfer to Year 1. This experience enables children to learn from older pupils and gradually adapt to life in Year 1. Children learn quickly how to follow new routines. They also understand what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and learning.

School details

Unique reference number	106346
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10046077

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Moran
Headteacher	Anthony Rae
Telephone number	0161 775 2847
Website	www.ourladyoflourdesprimary.trafford.sch.uk
Email address	lourdes.admin@trafford.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 May 2016

Information about this school

- Over the past year, there have been significant changes to the school's leadership. The chair of governors, headteacher and deputy headteacher resigned from their posts. A new chair was elected in September 2017 and, later that month, the governors appointed an acting deputy headteacher. A temporary executive headteacher took up post in January 2018. The person with responsibility for special educational needs changed in April 2018, and in May the role of acting deputy headteacher was made into a substantive post. Two new leaders took up their posts in September 2018, one with responsibility for the delivery of mathematics throughout the school, the other for English. Governors have appointed a substantive headteacher to take up post in January 2019. The current temporary headteacher will continue to support leaders once the new headteacher assumes her role.
- The local authority and governing body brokered the temporary appointment of the executive headteacher, who also leads Seymour Park Community Primary School.

Seymour Park is a partner within the Trafford Teaching School Alliance. This is a group of schools that work together to improve education in Trafford.

- There have also been many changes to the teaching staff. The teacher of the current Year 5 class took up post in April of 2018. Teachers of Years 1, 4 and 6 started at the beginning of this month.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The school is expecting an inspection under section 48 of the relevant education act. The purpose of the inspection will be to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school's religious character. The school does not currently use any form of alternative provision for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher and other leaders and managers. The lead inspector met with seven members of the governing body, one of whom holds the position of chair. The lead inspector met with Trafford's director of education.
- Inspectors talked to pupils during their breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with all teachers and two teaching assistants.
- School documents were scrutinised, including safeguarding checks, information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors visited classrooms, mainly with the headteacher, to speak with pupils, to look at their books and to observe their learning.
- The headteacher and other senior leaders were party to many of the inspection activities.
- Inspectors received 22 comments from parents sent by text. They also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors took account of 21 responses parents made to Parent view, an online survey of parents' views.
- There were no responses made by pupils or staff to inspection surveys.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Louise Smith

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