

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Primary School, Church

Bradshaw Row, Church, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 4HG

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school's effectiveness faltered after its last inspection in 2014. Many changes in leadership and staffing have hindered improvement. Some staffing issues continue to impede the course of improvement.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is improving, but standards of attainment are not high enough by the time pupils leave Year 6.
- The quality of teaching requires improvement because it is too variable. Not all teachers provide pupils with the right balance of support and challenge to ensure that they make good progress. The result is that pupils' learning and their rates of progress are uneven across year groups.
- The strong focus on English and mathematics within the curriculum limits the depth to which some other subjects are taught.
- Pupils do not always pay attention in lessons and do their best work. Pupils themselves say that while behaviour has improved, it is not good.
- Leaders do not ensure that pupils develop a secure understanding of British values or different types of families and relationships.
- The school's website does not provide all of the required information. A few minor safeguarding procedures need strengthening.

The school has the following strengths

- Under the current headteacher's leadership, pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have improved.
- The recently appointed deputy headteacher has strengthened the senior leadership team and the school's capacity to improve further.
- Governors challenge and support leaders effectively.
- Children in the early years receive a great start to their education and make good progress.
- Leaders are implementing a more strategic method of recording and analysing behaviour.
- Pupils achieve well in science. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well.
- Pupils say that they like school and feel safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring greater consistency in the ways that teachers:
 - use assessment in lessons to adapt work to pupils' needs so that the most able are challenged and those who find learning more difficult get the right type of help
 - quickly address pupils' misconceptions to ensure that these do not impede their learning of new ideas and vocabulary
 - guide and check the work of teaching assistants and maintain an overview of how well all pupils are learning during lessons
 - maintain pupils' attention in lessons through skilful questioning and providing content and tasks that interest pupils and take account of their stage of intellectual development and understanding of English
 - use classroom displays to support pupils in developing knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - leaders monitor closely the recent changes to the way reading is taught to confirm that they are having the desired impact on improving pupils' skills, comprehension, vocabulary and enjoyment, particularly that of pupils with middle prior attainment and boys
 - the good-quality writing that pupils produce in some year groups is more consistently evident across the school, particularly from boys
 - the most able pupils at both key stages are regularly challenged to attain greater depth in their writing
 - new approaches to the teaching of mathematics are embedded so that all teachers successfully improve pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding of mathematical ideas.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - ensuring that pupils understand and respect the full range of diversity in modern Britain and develop a more secure understanding of British values
 - continuing work to ensure that all pupils behave appropriately in lessons
 - embedding the new procedure to record and analyse behaviour more strategically.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - planning a curriculum that takes account of the sequence of knowledge, skills and understanding that leaders intend pupils to learn in each subject as they move through the school

- deciding how the curriculum will be implemented and taught to ensure that learning over time is secure
- ensuring that leaders and governors understand and resolve the degree of staff dissatisfaction that exists
- ensuring that all aspects of safeguarding, for example the dangers of sexting, are taught, in an age-appropriate way, as well as others
- ensuring that the school's website is current and includes all of the required statutory information, in particular that it provides parents with information about what their children are learning in all subjects throughout the year and includes leaders' evaluation of the impact of last year's pupil premium spending.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher joined the school in January 2017. This followed an extended period in which the school had no substantive headteacher. The many changes in leadership that occurred during this period required staff to adjust to changing expectations and shifts in the drive and direction for school improvement. This had a negative effect on staff morale. Morale lifted after the positive outcomes of the 2014 inspection, but the improved achievement and teaching reported by this inspection were not sustained. Consequently, the current headteacher inherited a school that was considerably less effective than when it was inspected in 2014.
- By 2016, there had been a significant decline in pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics. The structure and sequencing of the curriculum had been eroded and pupils' behaviour had deteriorated.
- The headteacher recognised that changes were necessary to raise pupils' achievement. The headteacher and local authority report that some staff clung to the findings of the 2014 inspection and resisted. They say that a minority of staff are still reluctant to act on feedback to improve their practice. The staff response to Ofsted's online survey shows that there is still a degree of low morale among some staff.
- Soon after her appointment, the headteacher introduced the local authority's curriculum scheme to secure continuity in what was taught in different subjects across year groups. The headteacher has not shied away from making difficult staffing decisions for the long-term benefit of pupils. In this, she continues to be supported by the local authority and her senior leadership team.
- The appointment of a new deputy headteacher in September 2018 has strengthened the leadership team and the school's capacity to improve. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and early years leader now make up the four-strong senior leadership team. All these leaders provide a strong role model for teaching and lead their areas of responsibility effectively.
- Under the headteacher's leadership, there have been clear improvements to pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6 and to pupils' behaviour. Efforts to improve teaching have ensured that there is strong practice in some parts of the school. Work to secure consistently good teaching across the school remains a challenge. The unsettled staffing situation in some year groups adds to this.
- Over time, the leadership of English has not been effective in securing good teaching and achievement in reading. The swift intervention of the headteacher in 2017 secured improvements in the teaching of writing and better writing outcomes by the end of Year 6.
- English is currently without a permanent subject leader. A temporary teacher is leading English effectively until a permanent leader is appointed. Staff are receiving training to improve the teaching of reading. The recent changes of approach look promising, but it is too early to evaluate their full impact on teaching and achievement.
- The leadership of mathematics has been more effective. Recent staff training has

focused on improving pupils' mastery of mathematical skills to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Leaders are currently checking that these approaches are being embedded. The leadership of science, computing and physical education (PE) is good. Pupils enjoy these subjects and achieve well in them.

- Given the historically weak progress and low attainment in English and mathematics, leaders' actions during the last two years have focused on securing improvements in these subjects. While the teaching of English and mathematics remain foremost in the school's curriculum, all national curriculum subjects are taught.
- Science and PE receive a generous amount of curriculum time. The time remaining for teaching other subjects, such as history, geography, art, design and technology, music and a foreign language, is relatively limited. Consequently, these subjects are taught less frequently and not always in sufficient depth.
- The new deputy headteacher is leading curriculum development. He has led staff discussions to agree the school's curriculum intent. Work to decide the order in which the knowledge and skills for every subject will be taught, and how all this will be organised and implemented, is planned for the start of the new academic year.
- The school offers pupils a varied range of extra-curricular activities. These include sports, science, singing and story-telling. The curriculum is also enriched by a range of educational visits to places of interest, including residential trips.
- The school's Christian values are clearly promoted through its work. Pupils with different faith backgrounds are welcomed into the school community. Pupils encounter various principles of British values, for example when they elect school councillors, express their opinions in school surveys, and consider the reasons for school rules. Educational visits, such as that to London, enable pupils to understand other aspects of British values.
- Overall, however, British values are not promoted well enough through the curriculum. Pupils are taught to value and respect religious and cultural diversity. However, they are not taught about other types of diversity, such as gender identity and different types of families and relationships. As such, pupils are not being adequately prepared for life in modern Britain.
- A new method of recording incidents of inappropriate behaviour is being implemented effectively. Staff have received training and teachers are now competent in using the system. The deputy headteacher is supporting lunchtime staff in making the necessary changes. The new system is already allowing leaders to analyse pupils' behaviour more strategically to inform decisions about improving behaviour further.
- Most parents and carers have positive views about the school's work. Some parents are understandably unhappy with frequent staff changes and are concerned about how these are affecting their children's education. A number feel that communication could be better, including about the curriculum. Inspectors agree that the school does not provide parents with all of the required information about the curriculum.
- The school's general adviser and the local authority's monitoring and improvement team are providing leaders with effective support to improve teaching and learning. The local authority has undertaken regular checks to verify and improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments. Staff training has been brokered to improve aspects of the

teaching of reading and mathematics. Meetings have been held with school leaders to discuss the future development of the curriculum. As part of the local authority's training and support programme for school leaders, an associate headteacher has been deployed to the school for a short period to add additional capacity for improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a good range of experience to their role. They are committed to the school and are playing their part in its improvement. Governors have attended training, including for safeguarding.
- Governors regularly ask leaders probing questions about pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and the wider curriculum. They seek assurances from leaders about the effectiveness of teaching and recognise the importance of achieving a stable staffing situation.
- Governors know that they have a duty to promote British values but have limited understanding of how this occurs.
- Governors regularly discuss the effectiveness of the school's spending on pupils' outcomes. This includes money allocated to the provision for pupils with SEND, the PE and sport premium and the additional funding to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. There are clear strategies for using the additional funding and a thorough evaluation of the PE and sport premium. While the pupil premium is being used effectively, governors have not published their evaluation of last year's pupil premium on the school's website.
- Governors have delegated responsibility for the school's website to a member of staff. However, they have not been vigilant in checking that all of the required information is published or up to date.
- Governors have surveyed staff for their views but have not received any responses. The staff's responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire shows that the majority enjoy working at the school. However, there is a clear need for governors and school leaders to understand and resolve the negative views of some staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Relevant checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff and volunteers to work with children. Some minor administrative amendments were made to the single central record on the first day of the inspection to ensure that it met requirements.
- The school's designated safeguarding leaders and all staff receive regular safeguarding training. Leaders undertake random 'spot-checks' to ensure that staff have understood the training and their responsibilities. During the inspection, welfare staff were able to demonstrate a secure understanding of how to respond to different safeguarding situations. The school's records show that staff are vigilant in reporting any concerns about pupils' safety and well-being. Any allegations of bullying are thoroughly investigated.

- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. However, some aspects of safeguarding are not as well taught as others, for example the dangers of sexting.
- The school premises are regularly checked to ensure that they are safe. A governor with specific expertise has ensured improvements to the security of the school site. The governors have ensured that appropriate filters are in place to keep pupils safe when using the school's internet. The school provides parents with comprehensive information about how to keep their children safe online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, the quality of teaching has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently strong progress and attain the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has improved in the last two years, but is not consistently good across the school. Pupils' books show uneven progress in these subjects. There is also inconsistency in the depth to which some subjects in the wider curriculum are taught.
- Some teachers do not make effective use of assessment in lessons to get the best out of pupils. While all pupils work towards the same mathematical and literacy objectives, teachers do not routinely adapt tasks to pupils' needs and prior attainment. In these situations, lower attainers struggle to complete the same work in the same way as the most able pupils. Conversely, the work set for the most able pupils does not always challenge them. When teachers do not keep a close enough eye on how well pupils are coping with the work, these situations are not rectified.
- Teachers do not consistently provide support staff with enough guidance for the tasks that they lead and do not check how well these staff are managing during the lesson. In general, support staff make a very valuable contribution to teaching and learning. At times, however, these staff provide pupils with so much information that pupils do not need to think for themselves. The outcome is that pupils' work can indicate that they have understood the intended learning, when in fact they have not.
- As with other aspects of teaching, there is inconsistency in teachers' subject knowledge and use of questioning. Some teachers' strong subject knowledge shines through in their clear explanations. These explanations increase pupils' knowledge and extend their vocabulary. Some teachers use questioning skilfully to allow pupils to explain their thinking. They also give less confident pupils and those developing fluency in English the time they need to contribute their ideas. In other situations, teachers do not explain vocabulary well enough or address pupils' misconceptions of word meanings.
- Changes to the way reading is taught are still being embedded. However, the teaching of phonics is improving and enabling more pupils to use this knowledge effectively. On most days, teachers and teaching assistants now work intensively with groups to further develop important reading skills. Teachers are also now providing pupils with more opportunities to read for pleasure and encouraging parents to be more involved in supporting pupils' reading at home.

- Across the school, there is now a greater focus on the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Pupils' books show that this work is having a particularly positive impact on the quality and accuracy of writing in upper key stage 2.
- Teachers are currently embedding new approaches to the teaching of mathematics. These stem from recent training to help teachers ensure that all pupils are challenged in mathematics lessons and have regular opportunities to think mathematically and solve problems.
- The support provided for pupils' learning through classroom displays varies. In some classes, pupils draw on highly useful examples of the features of different types of writing. There are also helpful examples to remind pupils of how to tackle mathematical calculations and problems. In other classes, however, displays offer insufficient support for pupils and are sometimes obscured by resources.
- There is very effective teaching of science and computing. Many pupils benefit from strong teaching in these subjects because they are taught by a specialist.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are successful in supporting the learning of pupils with SEND. Specific programmes of work are generally taught to pupils in their own classrooms during lessons. Pupils' progress is assessed and reviewed regularly.
- Teachers' management of behaviour is effective overall, but here too there is variation. Some teachers make learning interesting for pupils and ensure that pupils have opportunities to contribute. At other times, teaching does not engage pupils effectively enough.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils' appreciation of moral, social and cultural issues is generally well developed. They have a good sense of right and wrong and know that it is important to treat people who are different to themselves equally. However, pupils do not have an informed understanding of British values or the full range of diversity.
- Some pupils have developed a good understanding of what it takes to be a successful learner, but others lack this insight. Pupils who have experienced many changes of teacher have received mixed messages about expectations of their behaviour, contributions in lessons and application to work. The school's recent survey of pupils' views shows that over 40% do not know whether they produce a good amount of work each day.
- Many pupils are polite and keen to chat to visitors. Pupils have a mature insight into the quality of education that they receive and express their likes and dislikes coherently. Most say that they enjoy school, like their teachers and receive a good education. They are proud to hold various responsibilities, for example as play leaders and buddies to younger children in the playground.

- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They can explain various ways to stay safe, including when using the internet.
- Pupils know about different types of bullying and how this differs from general misbehaviour. They know to tell someone if they experience bullying or see it happening to others. Pupils who spoke with the inspectors and who responded to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire said that bullying is rare. Most consider that if they report bullying to school staff, it is dealt with effectively. A small number of pupils disagreed. The school's own recent survey of pupils' views reflected similar findings.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The school has set clear expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils consider that these are reasonable and that the rules and sanctions are fair.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved. However, they report that there are times when their learning is still disrupted by pupils shouting out in lessons, not getting on with their work and talking when they should be listening to the teacher.
- During the inspection, most pupils behaved well in lessons. However, some do not show respect for teachers or make sufficient effort to contribute. This is usually linked to weaknesses in the teaching. More rarely, pupils behave this way even when the work is suitable and interesting.
- Pupils consider that behaviour in the playground at lunchtime is not good enough. They say that occasionally there are fights and pupils use prejudice-based language. The school's behaviour records confirm that this type of behaviour occurs.
- During the inspection, inspectors did not observe any behaviour issues at lunchtime that put pupils' safety at risk. Indeed, behaviour on the playground was observed to be good-natured. Lunchtime staff have received training to support games and were doing so effectively during the inspection. In the dining hall, pupils are supervised well and chat sociably as they eat their lunch.
- Leaders work hard and successfully to ensure that pupils and their parents are aware of the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality. The current rate of attendance is close to national figures. The school ensures that any unexplained absences are quickly followed up. Few pupils are persistently absent. However, where this occurs, families are provided with support to ensure that attendance improves.
- Exclusion is used for serious behaviour incidents. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years. This year, the school has followed appropriate procedures in implementing a small number of repeat fixed-term exclusions.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- When the headteacher joined the school in 2017, the end of key stage 2 test results showed that progress in reading and mathematics had fallen to well below the average nationally. Fewer than half the Year 6 pupils had attained the expected standards in these subjects and only just over a third of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected

standard in reading. Teachers' more positive assessment of pupils' writing was not reflected in the work in pupils' books.

- The most recent (2018) end of key stage 2 test and assessment results are more positive. Progress scores in reading, writing and mathematics were in line with the national average. However, in reading, pupils with middle prior attainment and boys did not make enough progress. This has been a trend over time. Attainment in reading remained below the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils, although the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard was almost double that achieved in 2016.
- Current Year 6 pupils are demonstrating improved reading skills. They are familiar with a range of authors and their styles. Pupils read accurately, with good expression. The most able pupils use more complex skills, such as inference, to demonstrate their understanding of texts.
- Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 has been well-below average for the last three years. This is also the situation in writing and mathematics. Over time, some weaker teaching in this key stage and the unsettled staffing situation have had a negative impact on pupils' progress and attainment. There is evidence that progress at this key stage is improving, but it is too early to know whether this will be sustained.
- In 2018, more Year 1 pupils reached the expected standard in the phonics check. Of those pupils who did not attain the expected standard in this check, many are now using phonics more successfully. Year 2 pupils read appropriate books accurately and try hard to inject expression into their reading. For example, pupils know how to respond to basic punctuation. Moreover, pupils can provide some detail about the characters and story. Overall, while progress and attainment in reading are improving, standards by the end of each key stage are not high enough. Consequently, pupils are not prepared sufficiently well for the next stage of their education.
- The 2018 end of key stage 2 writing assessments show that the improvements the headteacher led in writing have been sustained. However, boys' progress and attainment continue to be weaker than girls'. Disadvantaged pupils made good progress and attained standards similar to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- The books of current pupils in Years 5 and 6 reflect their good progress in writing. Pupils' use of vocabulary and sentence structure shows developing sophistication. While there are some good examples of writing in lower key stage 2, the quality is variable and progress is patchy. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 now have more opportunities to practise different types of writing. Their books show improving progress, but attainment of the expected standard is not yet secure.
- The results of the 2018 key stage 2 mathematics tests show that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve better in this subject than in reading. There is a trend of improving attainment over the past three years, but few pupils reach the high standard. As a result of recent staff training, pupils' books show teachers' increased focus on providing pupils with work that is more challenging. However, it is too early to see the full impact of this work on end of key stage outcomes.
- Pupils' books and teachers' assessments show that pupils make strong progress in science and attain above-average standards by the end of both key stages. Books

show some good coverage of history and geography in Years 5 and 6. In other year groups, geography predominates and pupils study history much less frequently. Overall, pupils' topic books reflect a variable picture of achievement in the wider curriculum.

Early years provision

Good

- There is strong and effective leadership of the early years provision. Children flourish and make good progress.
- On beginning Nursery, many children's knowledge and skills are below those typical for their age. Nursery children thrive in the stimulating and caring environment. By the end of the year, more of these children demonstrate the knowledge and skills typical for their age.
- Each year, the Reception class includes children who have attended other pre-school settings. At times, Reception classes can include up to a third of children with specific learning needs. Consequently, children's attainment at the start of Reception remains below that which is typical for their age.
- While the proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of Reception has frequently been below average, this is not consistently linked to the same areas of learning. Last year, for example, Reception children's attainment in reading and writing was above that of children nationally. Staff are working effectively to raise attainment by the end of Reception. Importantly, they ensure that the children make strong progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities and develop very positive attitudes to school.
- Staff ensure that the organisation of classrooms and resources, inside and outdoors, allows the children to make choices about their learning. As a result, the children sustain good interest in activities. Staff intervene very effectively in children's work and play to move their learning on. Staff model language expertly, extending the children's vocabulary and developing their ability to construct sentences and questions.
- The children are encouraged to use all their senses to make learning real and meaningful. During the inspection, the children described the texture, smell and changing appearance of large 'dinosaur eggs', made from dried mud. They made their own mud 'dinosaur eggs', adding straw and including a small plastic dinosaur. The member of staff leading this work skilfully developed the children's mathematical and scientific vocabulary without breaking the spell of excitement. Elsewhere in the setting, children mixed their own paints to match the colours of different plastic dinosaurs.
- The adults regularly set up captivating challenges for the children to solve. During the inspection, the children were considering how to help a baby dinosaur move along a track. As the adults modelled their thinking, the children came up with various ideas to test. Water power was eventually used to accomplish the task.
- Children have valuable and extensive opportunities to develop their physical and social skills. They use the outdoor area in all weathers and learn to gauge risks and play safely. The children are taught to consider each other's needs, take turns and work cooperatively. There are plenty of opportunities for the children to learn about number,

enjoy books and develop writing skills. Phonics is taught well. During the inspection, Reception children were accurately sounding out simple words and able to use more complex words in their writing. Staff make very effective use of ongoing assessments to identify the next steps in children's learning. They share children's achievements with parents and support parents in extending children's learning at home. Parents value the work of the early years team and cannot speak highly enough of the impact it has on their children's education.

- It is clear that the children enjoy school, like the adults who teach them and feel safe. Procedures to keep children safe are thorough.

School details

Unique reference number	119658
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10045874

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Kenyon
Headteacher	Kathryn Thomas
Telephone number	01254 233 382
Website	www.sacredheartschoolchurch.co.uk
Email address	bursar@sacredheart-church.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 May 2014

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school's religious character is designated as Roman Catholic. The school's last inspection of its religious character took place in May 2015.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are high.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportions of pupils with SEND or an education, health and care plan are average.
- The school's early years provides for Nursery and Reception children. Nursery children attend part-time.
- Since the last inspection, there have been considerable changes in staffing, including at

leadership level. Some current teaching staff, including the English subject leader, are temporary.

- The school is receiving support from the local authority's monitoring and intervention team.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. They looked at pupils' work in books and listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness and their plans for improvement.
- Inspectors examined safeguarding information and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held two formal discussions with pupils and spoke to other pupils informally in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors held discussions with the school's senior and subject leaders. The lead inspector had a discussion with six governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors took account of 28 responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Parent View, including seven written responses. They considered a recent parental survey undertaken by the school to which 123 parents responded and spoke to some parents as they collected their children from school.
- Inspectors reviewed 10 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire and 113 responses to a recent pupil survey conducted by the school. They considered 24 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Margot D'Arcy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Stephen Rigby

Ofsted Inspector

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