

The Trinity Catholic Primary School

Titchfield Street, Vauxhall, Liverpool, Merseyside L5 8UT

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Over time, leaders and governors have let the school decline. Pupils' outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment are now inadequate. Disadvantaged pupils underachieve considerably.
- Leaders failed to challenge weaknesses in teaching and, until recently, did not provide teachers with training to help them to improve.
- Teachers' expectations are too low. They do not provide work for pupils which is the right level to help them progress in their learning. Some pupils are not challenged enough, especially the most able.
- Teachers do too little to deepen pupils' understanding of history and geography.
- Attendance is improving, but some pupils are absent far too often.
- Some pupils occasionally use hurtful or racist language.
- Pupils' writing skills are weak. Teachers do not consider how to improve pupils' writing skills by building on what pupils can already do.
- The teaching of reading is poor. Some pupils are not reading books which are the right level of difficulty for them.
- The curriculum does not ensure that some subjects are taught in sufficient depth. The school does not enable pupils to develop their creative talents.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has acted swiftly to halt the decline in pupils' attainment and progress. With the support of senior leaders, she has already improved pupils' behaviour and attendance and ensured that vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils receive effective support.
- Staff have a good knowledge of safeguarding. Pupils said that they feel safe in school.
- Governors now provide more rigorous challenge to leaders.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving because of the support from the subject leader which is helping staff to improve their skills.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years because teaching is good. Children are well cared for. Leadership in the early years is good.
- Pupils work well together and have positive attitudes to learning. They are polite, friendly and show respect for adults.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in reading, writing and mathematics in key stages 1 and 2, and thereby urgently improve pupils' outcomes, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment information effectively to plan work that fills the gaps in pupils' learning
 - providing work that challenges all pupils, but especially the disadvantaged and the most able
 - ensuring that all staff have consistently high expectations of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar in subjects other than English
 - making sure that teachers check that pupils understand new words, including technical vocabulary, across the curriculum
 - providing all pupils with reading books that are suitably challenging for them
 - making sure that pupils read regularly and understand what that they have read.
- Leaders should take further action to improve the curriculum by:
 - developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in sufficient depth in subjects such as history and geography
 - developing pupils' creative talents in subjects such as art and music.
- Leaders should further improve pupils' personal development and behaviour by:
 - raising levels of attendance and reducing persistent absence, especially for disadvantaged pupils, so that all pupils attend school when they should
 - challenging any incidents of hurtful comments and racist language, so that these stop.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the quality of education at the school has slipped markedly. Leaders and governors failed to respond to pupils' low attainment and poor progress over time in key stages 1 and 2. Leaders did not check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment well enough or help teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice. Despite much help being offered to the school by the local authority and archdiocese in recent years, leaders and governors did not make good use of this assistance.
- From September 2018, the huge uphill task of resolving the many problems in the school has stepped up a gear. The new headteacher has a clear and ambitious vision for the future of The Trinity Primary School. Together with her interim leadership team, she understands the issues facing the school. Senior leaders have established precise priorities for improvement. They have taken swift action to halt the decline in the standard of education.
- New school leaders and governors have embraced the guidance and support from the local authority and archdiocese. They are making sure that this extra help is directed towards the most significant weaknesses in the school. This includes the poor quality of teaching and teachers' inaccurate assessments of pupils' attainment.
- Senior leaders have formed partnerships with three other primary schools so that middle leaders can learn from their successful practice. As a result, pupils at The Trinity with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are now receiving better support than in the past. Leaders are introducing a range of well-planned improvements to the curriculum.
- The acting special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has accurately re-assessed all pupils with SEND to identify their learning needs and plan more effective support for them. SEND funding is now targeted at the pupils who need this support most, such as pupils with SEND who also speak English as an additional language.
- Leaders have reviewed the way that the school uses pupil premium funding. As a result, they have a better understanding of the reasons why this group of pupils have underachieved in the past. Leaders understand the continuing obstacles that some pupils face. They now target expenditure carefully at pupils entitled to this funding. As a result, the support that this group of pupils receive is becoming more effective than it has been in the past.
- The headteacher has taken decisive action to improve pupils' attendance, eradicate lateness and to ensure that pupils dress smartly for school. Leaders provide a free breakfast, new uniform or an alarm clock to help pupils to get up in time for school. The school takes robust action to ensure that parents and carers send their children to school regularly. Consequently, the headteacher has experienced considerable challenge from some parents and carers. This was reflected in some of the less favourable responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. However, pupils' attendance is starting to improve. Fewer pupils are now regularly late for school. Pupils wear their uniform with pride and their behaviour is also improving.

- Senior leaders now check carefully on the quality of teaching and learning. They have an accurate knowledge of the strengths of teaching and where teachers need to improve their practice. Senior leaders are making certain that suitable training and support is in place for all staff. Newly qualified teachers appreciate the support given to them by leaders and other teachers.
- Some class teachers continue to be absent for long periods from school. Their classes are taught by temporary staff and parents are unhappy about the disruption to their children's education. Leaders provide support and training for all staff in the school, including temporary teachers. However, in some classes, pupils are not benefiting fully from the improvements to teaching seen in other classes.
- Senior leaders use the primary physical education and sport premium funding well to employ coaches to work with pupils. They also use funding to improve staff's skills in supporting pupils' physical development. Some pupils have been trained to help other pupils to play together on the playground and to act safely.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural experiences are developed well through the curriculum. The school works closely with the local church as part of celebrations. Pupils are encouraged to think about the meaning of events in the church calendar for their lives. Pupils take part in trips and visits to local museums to increase their knowledge of the local area.
- Senior leaders have not made sure that all subjects in the curriculum are taught in enough depth. Pupils are not learning successfully in history, geography, art and music.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not provided enough challenge to leaders about the work of the school. They did not have an accurate picture of the quality of pupils' education. However, governors have regrouped and have put in place arrangements to rigorously check and challenge leaders about school improvement. For example, governors now work closely with the local authority and the archdiocese to double-check that pupils' progress and attainment are improving.
- A new chair of governors has recently been appointed, along with other new governors. Governors have acted on the findings of a recent audit of their skills to resolve gaps in their expertise. They take part in training, such as that provided by the local authority.
- Governors now provide greater challenge to leaders than in the past. They agree clear actions and set firm deadlines for work to be completed.
- Following an external review of safeguarding procedures, governors took immediate action to make sure that pupils are safe. Similarly, following an external review of pupil premium spending, governors have acted to ensure that this money is now being used to support pupils properly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks on the suitability of staff who are employed to work in the school are carried out diligently and recorded accurately. Administrative errors identified during this

inspection were immediately put right when brought to leaders' attention.

- Staff receive regular training to keep their knowledge of safeguarding procedures up to date. They know the correct procedures to follow to report any concerns they might have about a pupil or an adult.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inadequate, except in the early years. Over time, leaders have not resolved weaknesses in teaching. Teachers have not received the help that they need to improve their practice.
- Improvements to teaching have not happened quickly enough to improve pupils' progress. This is further hampered by high levels of staff absence.
- Teachers do not plan work well enough to develop pupils' skills, deepen their understanding or provide the right level of challenge for them, especially for the most able. For example, teachers do not consider how to develop pupils' skills in writing in a way which builds on what pupils already know.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving are too low in key stages 1 and 2. Teachers do not know pupils' starting points because, in the past, teachers' assessments were inaccurate.
- Teachers use assessments to identify gaps in learning and to provide intensive support for small groups of pupils in Year 6. This work has only very recently started, but it is well targeted at teaching the skills that these pupils have missed. However, it is too soon to see if it is making a difference to pupils' attainment. In other year groups, teachers do not use assessment well in their planning to fill any gaps in pupils' learning.
- Pupils have been taught how to spell words correctly and to use correct grammar and punctuation in English. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' correct use of spelling, punctuation and grammar in their English books. However, teachers do not always insist on these same standards in other subjects. The presentation of pupils' written work and handwriting are often poor in subjects other than English in both key stages.
- Pupils' geographical knowledge, taught for example through the school's 'Commonwealth Week', is superficial because teachers plan too much in too little depth. Pupils in key stage 2 work with large numbers when using population figures. However, they cannot explain possible reasons for population differences, such as those linked to the terrain, types of housing or land use.
- Mathematics teaching is improving, especially in key stage 2. Some teachers plan activities which support pupils' strong understanding of mathematical concepts. Teachers use an interesting variety of questions so that pupils are encouraged to think about their mathematics work.
- The teaching of reading is not good enough across both key stages. Some teachers do not extend pupils' vocabulary or improve pupils' comprehension skills. Teachers do not check pupils' understanding of new words or technical vocabulary. Some pupils are not reading books of the right level of difficulty for them.

- Phonics teaching in key stage 1 is improving but inconsistencies remain where adults use incorrect sounds for some letters. This causes confusion when pupils try to sound out unfamiliar words.

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 said that they feel safe. However, they do know of pupils who have been bullied in the past and say that this has continued for a few pupils. They are confident that teachers or adults do their best to try to stop it happening. However, a very small number of pupils continue to cause others to be upset.
- Teachers have taught pupils how to keep themselves safe from strangers, when crossing the road or from dangers in the local community. Pupils also know how to keep themselves safe online when using computers and mobile devices.
- Pupils work very well together and are keen to discuss their thoughts and ideas with each other. They have good attitudes to learning and usually try their best, even when activities are not particularly interesting or challenging.
- Pupils who attend breakfast club enjoy socialising with their friends at the start of the day. Many pupils take part in the organised games and opportunities for them to develop their physical skills. Others prefer to chat, read, play games on computers or do colouring and word searches.
- Pupils understand diversity. Most show tolerance and respect for values and beliefs that are different from their own. Pupils have been taught about Islam and Judaism, for example.
- A range of visitors and outside agencies work with pupils to help them to stay safe. This includes the local police who have delivered workshops on gangs, knife crime and making positive choices.
- A range of external specialist support is provided for pupils who need extra help. This includes support for speech and language development. The school also works closely with other agencies, such as the educational psychology service.
- Pupils have a growing number of opportunities to take on additional responsibilities in the school and in the local community. Pupils are representatives on the school council and playleaders for younger pupils. In this school, pupils' views are important. Leaders are working with pupils to develop a new behaviour policy and system of rewards that pupils will value.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors in their school. Most pupils show respect towards each other and to adults in classrooms and around the school. Pupils

routinely hold doors open for each other and demonstrate good manners.

- The number of incidents of poor behaviour is reducing quickly. Teachers make clear the standards of behaviour they expect from pupils. Teachers manage poor behaviour carefully so that incidents do not negatively impact on learning.
- The frequency of serious incidents of unacceptable behaviour that result in periods of exclusion has reduced significantly. However, there are still some older pupils in key stage 2 who struggle to accept staff's higher expectations for their behaviour. On occasions, they swear or use racist language. Leaders have made clear to pupils and their parents that this will not be tolerated at the school.
- Attendance has been below the national average for at least the past three years, with no signs of improvement. However, since the headteacher has introduced new strategies to tackle persistent absence, pupils' attendance is starting to improve, including for disadvantaged pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a decline in pupils' attainment and progress. This is especially true for pupils at the end of key stage 2, and particularly in reading and in mathematics. In recent years, the school has not prepared pupils well for the next stage of their education.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils continue to make poor progress in the development of their skills, especially in writing for pupils in key stage 2. This is because teaching has not improved quickly enough to help pupils to catch up.
- In mathematics, pupils' understanding of shape, statistics and algebra are not developed well. Consequently, pupils' attainment in these areas is weak.
- Pupils who read to inspectors struggled to remember books they had read or anything about the story they were currently reading.
- In science, the new scheme of work guides teachers in introducing scientific investigation through practical work. Pupils said that they enjoy science more now than in the past. Attainment in science is improving.
- Pupils' knowledge of history and geography is weak. Some pupils struggled to remember anything they had learned in history. This is because teachers do not teach these subjects well enough or in any depth. Subject leaders of history and geography are receiving support from other schools to help them to improve their subject areas.
- Disadvantaged pupils have underachieved at this school in recent years. The difference in their attainment compared with that of other pupils nationally has widened. Pupil premium funding is being used to pay for additional teachers and adults to work with these pupils in improving English and mathematics. However, this work has only started recently.
- Pupils with SEND have made poor progress in the past. Some, from low starting points, achieved well. However, others made much less progress. Most teaching assistants who work with these pupils now know how to help them to overcome barriers to learning. As a result, pupils with SEND are starting to make improved progress in developing their skills.

- The most able pupils in school typically reach the expectations for their age. In the past, very few reached the higher standards in their work. Pupils are not routinely given work that deepens their understanding, so some of the most able pupils continue to underachieve.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children start school in Nursery or in Reception with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. Children settle in quickly. Their learning gets off to a good start because of the strong support that they receive. They make good progress.
- Teaching in the early years is stronger and more effective than in other key stages. Teachers and other adults are skilled in assessing children's needs and planning interesting activities that support their learning. Teachers and other adults have consistently high expectations of behaviour and calmly support children to understand what is expected of them.
- Over time, leadership in the early years has been strong and effective. The early years leader has encouraged adults to work together as a cohesive team to plan engaging and fun learning activities for children. Adults have benefited from high-quality training and support delivered by the early years leader.
- Children work and play with interest and enthusiasm. They listen well to adults and are quick to follow instructions with minimum fuss. Children are eager to learn.
- Disadvantaged and vulnerable children are as equally well supported as their classmates; they go on to make good progress from their starting points.
- Classrooms are stimulating, well organised and with clearly defined areas to support children's learning. Children are very happy and confident to talk about their activities.
- Staff assess children accurately. Children make strong progress in their writing, from early making of marks through to letter formation and writing simple words. Staff provide good support in helping children to develop a firm pencil grip. Staff also model the writing of letters well for children to copy.
- Phonics teaching is a strength. Staff insist that children listen carefully as they model the correct sounds for children to copy.
- Children are becoming increasingly more confident in demonstrating their counting skills, some to beyond 50, using blocks to help them.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were full of praise for the staff in the early years. They said that their children are well cared for and are happy coming to school.
- Leaders make sure that the safeguarding of children in the early years is effective.

School details

Unique reference number	134722
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10082090

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	377
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Kennedy
Headteacher	Rebecca Flynn
Telephone number	0151 298 2917
Website	www.thetrinityprimary.com
Email address	trinity-ao@thetrinityliverpool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools.
- About three-quarters of pupils come from a White British background, with small numbers from other heritages, including some Travellers of Irish heritage.
- An above average proportion of pupils are identified as speaking English as an additional language.
- About half of the pupils are disadvantaged, which is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average. A very small number of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Early years provision comprises one Nursery class for three- and four-year-old children and two Reception classes for four- and five-year-olds. Children in the Nursery attend part time.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning and an after-school club each

evening.

- A very small number of pupils attend off-site alternative provision, either full time or part time, for speech and language support.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2018. The chair of governors was new to their role in January 2019.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in October 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms to observe teaching and pupils' learning. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Samples of pupils' mathematics work and their writing in books were scrutinised jointly with leaders. Inspectors also looked at work displayed on walls in classrooms and on corridors.
- Inspectors observed pupils at lunchtime and at playtime and spoke with pupils about their work during lessons.
- Inspectors met formally with two groups of pupils; one to listen to them read and the other to find out their views of the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with staff and middle and senior leaders. An inspector also spoke with the newly qualified teachers in the school.
- An inspector spoke with parents as they arrived at school at the end of the day to collect their children. An inspector analysed the 30 responses to Parent View, as well as 20 free-text comments.
- An inspector met with a group of governors. An inspector met separately with representatives from the local authority school improvement support service and from the archdiocese.
- Inspectors scrutinised a sample of pupil case studies to find out about the support provided to vulnerable pupils and those with SEND.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding. They took account of leaders' views on the school's effectiveness, the school improvement plan and information on pupils' achievements, attendance and behaviour. Notes from governors' meetings were also considered.

Inspection team

Denah Jones, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kathy Hall	Ofsted Inspector
Keith Wright	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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