

St Stephen and All Martyrs' CofE School, Lever Bridge

Radcliffe Road, Bolton, Lancashire BL2 1NZ

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The school has been through a time of turbulence in leadership. This has affected the quality of provision and outcomes.
- The quality of teaching is varied. At times, expectations for pupils' learning are not high enough to develop learning effectively.
- Teaching is, at times, not closely matched to pupils' needs, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils' progress varies across subjects and year groups. Progress in writing, although improving, is weaker than other subjects. Pupils' skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation are not consistently well-developed.
- Pupils' skills in mathematical reasoning and problem-solving are sometimes not well-developed.
- A small minority of pupils struggle to manage their emotions in the playground. Occasionally, there is off-task behaviour in class.
- Pupils sometimes lack resilience to persevere with their learning. Some pupils' work shows a lack of pride in presentation.
- Middle leadership is at an early stage of development. Most middle leaders are not effectively driving improvement in their areas of expertise.
- Leaders provide an appropriately broad curriculum. This does not provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to develop an awareness of different cultures and beliefs.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has ensured that the school's vision and passion for improvement is shared by staff, leaders and governors alike.
- Children in early years get off to a good start due to effective teaching.
- Parents, staff and pupils agree that the school keeps pupils safe.
- Initiatives to improve teaching and progress are improving progress in writing and mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and pupils' outcomes, by:
 - ensuring that expectations for learning are consistently high
 - ensuring that assessment is used to more closely match activities to pupils' abilities, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
 - ensuring a consistent approach to the teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical skills of problem solving and reasoning.
- Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour, by:
 - encouraging skills of resilience and perseverance
 - supporting more closely those pupils who struggle to manage their emotions and behaviour
 - encouraging pupils to take pride in the presentation of their work.
- Improve leadership and management, by:
 - developing the skills of middle leaders to more effectively promote improvement in their areas of responsibility
 - improving the curriculum to provide opportunities for pupils to develop a better understanding of cultures and faiths other than their own.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how the school may improve this aspect of its work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced turbulence in leadership which has hampered the pace of improvement. Until recently, although some aspects of provision had improved, such as reading progress, other areas had declined.
- Since her arrival, the current headteacher has worked to establish a shared vision to bring about improvement and provide the best possible provision and outcomes for pupils. Leaders and governors have brought about improvements to pupils' attendance and safety. Initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes in writing and mathematics are beginning to bear fruit. These improvements demonstrate leaders' capacity to improve the school further.
- Leaders and governors have an honest, accurate view of the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils. Development planning makes clear what needs to improve, how this will come about, and how the impact will be measured. Regular review ensures that progress is monitored.
- The leadership of teaching is improving. The quality of teaching is monitored, and support put in place where needed. Training needs are identified, and staff attend relevant training. For example, recent staff training in the teaching of writing is showing an impact on improving pupils' progress in this subject.
- Staff morale is high. Staff speak positively of the impact of the new headteacher and typically report that they feel supported as staff and empowered as middle and subject leaders.
- Most middle and subject leaders are relatively new to their roles. All leaders share a passion for further improvement and demonstrate a good knowledge of their areas of expertise. Leaders of English and mathematics have taken steps to bring about improvement to the quality of teaching in their subjects. This has resulted in improvements in pupils' progress. Most leaders have yet to play a strong role in driving improvement in their areas of expertise.
- Leaders provide a curriculum that is appropriately broad and balanced. It has been recently reviewed to ensure that it fully meets national curriculum requirements and relates more closely to boys' interests. This has led to improvements in boys' progress in writing. Pupils enjoy after-school activities such as street dance, and have opportunities to learn to play musical instruments. Pupils learn the importance of respect for others but have limited chances to learn about cultures or faiths other than their own.
- Leaders ensure that pupil premium funding is spent appropriately to provide, for example, extra staffing, staff training and financial support for school trips. Disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their peers. Although improvements to teaching are showing signs of improving progress for these pupils, differences in progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are slow to diminish.

- The funding for pupils with SEND is used to ensure that identified pupils are provided with teaching support. However, this support is not consistently tailored to ensure that it fully meets pupils' needs. As a result, progress for these pupils is variable.
- The primary physical education and sports premium funding is used well to develop pupils' physical skills and enjoyment of exercise. Staff undertake training to improve their teaching of physical skills. Sports coaches provide, for example, dance classes, and after-school sport such as futsal and volleyball.
- The local authority and diocese have provided effective support to the school during its period of instability in leadership. In January 2018, the diocese and local authority established a joint education board (JEB) to run alongside the existing governing body in order to improve the quality of governance.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school has been through a period of change since January 2018. The JEB has worked alongside the existing governing body to further develop the skills of the governing body and ensure that school leaders are effectively held to account. At the time of the inspection, the JEB was about to hand over full responsibility for governance to the governing body.
- There is some overlap in membership of the governing body and JEB. Both bodies have a broad range of experience and expertise to bring to the role. The governing body has grown in skill and capacity to fulfil its role more effectively. Members have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the school.
- Minutes of meetings show that governors ask pertinent and challenging questions to hold leaders to account. Governors share school leaders' passion and determination to bring about further improvement.
- Governors are aware of how funding is spent and keep a close eye on finances. They have a keen awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities and ensure that these are met.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of keeping pupils safe at school. Staff receive regular training and are familiar with the procedures to follow should they have concerns about a pupil.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Record-keeping is in good order. Staff respond in a timely way if concerns are raised. Close liaison with outside agencies ensures that pupils' needs are met.
- Since the arrival of the new headteacher, further action has been taken to improve the security of the school premises. Teachers, parents and pupils all report that the school keeps pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies across year groups and subjects. Over time, the teaching of reading is stronger than that of writing or mathematics.
- Teachers' expectations for pupils' learning are not consistently high. Where they are too low, pupils' learning is not deepened effectively as work does not provide sufficient challenge.
- Assessment procedures are embedding. Teachers keep track of how pupils' learning is developing. They often use this knowledge to provide work that meets pupils' needs and develops learning well. At other times, work is not well matched to pupils' capabilities, with the result that learning is limited. For example, in a lower key stage 2 lesson, pupils finished their mathematical tasks very quickly because the work was too easy.
- The teaching of writing is improving. Pupils learn to write for a variety of purposes and show increasing confidence in planning their writing. Teachers' expectations for pupils' spelling, punctuation, grammar and for presentation of work are not consistent. This means that pupils' mistakes are often repeated, and writing can be poorly presented. This limits the progress pupils make in improving the quality of their work.
- The teaching of mathematics is becoming more closely related to pupils' needs and interests. At times, skilled questioning and interesting tasks encourage pupils to engage well in tasks and deepen their reasoning skills. For example, pupils in upper key stage 2 were highly engaged in a game, adding the decimals in each square as they moved counters to make a path through a number square. They rose to the challenge of ensuring that the final answer did not add up to more than one.
- On some occasions, mathematical tasks are not closely matched to pupils' skill levels and so are too hard or too easy.
- Phonics is well taught. Teaching sessions ensure that skills are effectively built on and that pupils apply their skills in their reading and writing. Pupils who read to inspectors showed good skills in applying their phonic knowledge to read unfamiliar words.
- Teaching encourages pupils to develop a love of reading and an appreciation of books. Themed activities based around class novels are used well to develop pupils' interest and understanding of books.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Most pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and engage well in activities. However, where tasks are challenging, or require perseverance to complete, pupils sometimes show a lack of engagement and resilience. For example, in key stage 1 mathematics, pupils quickly lost interest and became distracted when they found the

task too difficult.

- Pupils say that they enjoy school. They learn to take responsibility through their roles as, for example, school councillors, ethos team members and playground pals.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They say that the school premises are safe and that teachers keep them safe. Pupils show a good awareness of safety, of how to stay safe online and fire safety.
- Pupils understand what bullying means. They report that it sometimes happens in school, but that adults sort it out.
- Pupils show respect for each other. They cooperate well together to share ideas for activities. Pupils show a limited understanding of cultures and beliefs other than their own.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Most pupils behave well in the playground. However, a small minority of pupils who find it difficult to manage their emotions can, at times, disrupt others. Pupils who spoke with inspectors reported that there is occasional fighting in the playground, and that they would like this to stop.
- Pupils usually behave well in lessons. At times, where learning is not meeting their needs, they become restless and lose focus on the task. At these times, pupils chat and sometimes distract others.
- Pupils' conduct around school is good. They move sensibly between rooms and when lining up.
- Pupils' attendance has improved as a result of the school's concerted efforts to encourage good attendance. Attendance is currently just above the national average and persistent absence has reduced to below the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Published information indicates that pupils' progress in key stage 2 has varied. Progress in writing has been weak, but for reading shows an improving picture. Mathematics progress has varied but shows recent improvement.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been below national average in writing, and similar to average in reading. Mathematics attainment has varied but was below average in 2018.
- Key stage 1 attainment has been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection.
- Current pupils' progress varies between subjects and year groups. Current pupils make stronger progress in reading than in writing and mathematics. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that progress in writing and mathematics is improving as the quality of teaching in these subjects improves. However, inconsistencies remain.

- Disadvantaged pupils' progress has been similar to that of non-disadvantaged pupils for the last two years. Current progress is improving and there are signs that differences in progress between these pupils and others nationally are beginning to diminish.
- Pupils attain in line with national averages in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Current pupils are making good progress in developing their phonic knowledge and are on track to attain well in this year's phonics screening check.
- Historically, the progress of pupils with SEND has been variable and in writing has been weak. Current pupils' progress, along with that of other pupils in school, shows improvement as teaching becomes more tailored to meeting their individual needs.
- Pupils' progress in other subjects is variable. Pupils enjoy learning about topics in science and geography. For example, lower key stage 2 pupils enjoyed exploring factual information to develop their understanding of rivers. Upper key stage 2 pupils showed a good understanding of plant reproduction as they delivered group presentations on this subject to their classmates. However, evidence from pupils' books and school information shows that their progress in these subjects, and others, is not consistently good.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter Reception class with skill levels that are generally below those typical for their age. They make good progress due to effective teaching. By the end of Reception Year, the proportion attaining a good level of development is in line with national averages. This means that most children are well prepared for the transfer to Year 1.
- The early years leader has a good awareness of the quality of provision. She closely monitors children's progress and swiftly identifies children who may be lagging behind. Effective support is put in place to ensure that children catch up.
- Staff know the children well. They plan activities which meet children's needs, interest them and provide challenge. For example, children enjoy participating in the range of activities focused on the 'Jack and the Beanstalk' story.
- Children display good levels of concentration, independence and perseverance as they happily plant runner bean seeds in the outdoor area. They selected the pots, filled them with compost, planted the bean and labelled the pot with their name, without adult assistance.
- Children engage well with the broad range of opportunities to develop their early writing skills. They enjoyed writing using large chalks in the outdoor area. They concentrated well on forming letters and writing simple sentences on the indoor large whiteboard.
- Staff question children well to develop their thinking and extend their learning. For example, children were encouraged to estimate how many wooden spoons are in a pot. Children's understanding of what seeds need to make them grow was carefully checked as children planted runner bean seeds.
- Children show a strong sense of security in their surroundings. They use equipment safely, such as scissors. They behave well and are familiar with the routines of

Reception Class.

- Staff work well with parents to promote children's learning. Parents contribute 'wow' moments to assessments of their children's learning. They appreciate the communication between staff and parents. Parents feel supported to help their children's learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	105217
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10087813

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	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marcus Chester
Headteacher	Rebecca Unsworth
Telephone number	01204 333155
Website	http://www.ssam.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	unsworthr@ssam.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 December 2016

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club for its pupils.
- The school is designated as a Church of England primary school. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in May 2016.
- There have been a number of changes to senior leadership since the last inspection. Following the long-term absence and departure of the previous headteacher, two executive headteachers took up a shared post in February 2018. The current headteacher took up post in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the chair of the governing body, the chair of the JEB and four other governors, the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also held a telephone meeting with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information produced by the school, including information on pupils' progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance, procedures for safeguarding and the school's own evaluation of its work. They considered reports to the governing body, minutes of their meetings and the school's plans for further improvement.
- Inspectors considered the 47 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views of 43 parents who communicated via text message to Ofsted.
- Inspectors also took account of the 24 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 30 responses to the online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Elaine White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Maureen Hints

Ofsted Inspector

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