

St Anne's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Accrington

Sandy Lane, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 2AN

Inspection dates

8–9 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- In recent years, pupils have not achieved as well as they should across subjects.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is behind that of other pupils because of previously weak teaching. Leaders' oversight of this aspect of the school's work is imprecise.
- The quality of teaching is variable. On occasion, teachers do not use planning and assessment well enough to make sure that all pupils, including the most able, are sufficiently challenged in their work.
- Leaders do not make certain that the curriculum provides pupils with tasks that are part of a sequence of learning, building on what they have learned before.
- In the early years, staff do not develop children's skills and knowledge well in some activities. Leaders' understanding of some of the school's work in the early years is patchy.

The school has the following strengths

- Due to the work of governors, leaders and staff, together with the assistance of the local authority and diocese, the school is improving.
- The quality of learning and pupils' work across several subjects, including mathematics, English and science, are strongly improving this year. Parents and carers said that they see many positive changes in leadership, teaching and behaviour.
- New staff, including the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and middle leaders are working skilfully with the headteacher to improve the school.
- Pupils behave sensibly and responsibly. They show good attitudes to learning.
- Staff morale is high. They feel well supported and involved in helping the school to improve.
- Leaders and staff have an accurate grasp of what the school does successfully and where further work is required.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress and attainment of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - ensuring that planned learning provides all pupils, including the most able and disadvantaged pupils, with enough challenge to deepen their knowledge and develop their skills
 - making full use of assessment during lessons to adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs
 - making greater use of the strengths of different staff to support the improvement of teachers' practice and to ensure greater consistency in the effectiveness of teaching.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - planning and reviewing the expenditure and impact of the pupil premium funding more thoroughly
 - making certain that the planned curriculum includes activities that build on previous learning, so that teaching develops pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills sequentially.
- Improve the quality of the early years by:
 - providing children with greater challenge when they choose tasks for themselves
 - sharpening leaders' self-evaluation and improvement planning to pinpoint more specifically which aspects of teaching and learning need to improve.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The main reason that leadership and management require improvement is because, over time, leaders have not made certain that teaching and outcomes are good.
- The school has experienced staffing turbulence for several years. Following the previous inspection there was further decline in the quality of education. Governors at that time failed in their duties to ensure that the school moved forward at pace. Following assistance from the diocese and the local authority, the school is once again heading in the right direction. Teaching, behaviour and leadership, including governance, are improving quickly. Outcomes are also improving but a legacy of underachievement remains. Leaders and governors are resolute in their determination to improve the school further.
- Senior leaders have not ensured that pupil premium funding is used to successfully diminish the difference in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils at the school and others nationally. Senior leaders' oversight of the pupil premium is improving but lacks precision. They have not thoroughly evaluated the impact of previous spending. As a result, their current plans to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils are not based upon a clear understanding of what has and has not worked well in the past.
- Leaders have introduced a successful focus on developing pupils' vocabulary as part of the curriculum. However, the planned curriculum does not consistently help teachers to sequence learning in a way that systematically builds pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Leaders are aware of this limitation and have set aside staff training time to begin to address this issue as a priority.
- Senior leaders have introduced a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils, such as curling and archery, funded in part through careful use of the physical education and sport premium. These opportunities are helping pupils to become more physically active, able to work in a team and to experience success.
- Newly appointed middle leaders are working well. For instance, mathematics is led successfully. The coordinator has a secure grasp of the demands of the subject and how she can ensure that teaching and outcomes improve.
- The leadership of science is strong. The coordinator links effectively with local and national networks to support the development of the subject. She has a good understanding of how well science is taught in the school and how well pupils are learning. She uses her good subject knowledge and understanding of science teaching to plan effectively for improvement. Her successful leadership is reflected in the good quality of current pupils' work.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is first-rate. The SENCo has transformed arrangements for supporting pupils and reviewing the effectiveness of teaching. She has ensured that leaders know much more precisely how much SEND funding the school receives and what impact it is having on pupils' learning and development. Self-evaluation and planning of the school's SEND work are well considered.

- The new deputy headteacher has brought valuable expertise and insight to her role. She provides clear leadership and works in tandem with the headteacher to oversee the improvement of teaching and learning. Together, they have an accurate view of the effectiveness of teaching, including an understanding of which areas remain as relative weaknesses. Working closely with other leaders, they have ensured that training for teachers is having a demonstrable impact on improving the effectiveness of teaching. Staff value the opportunities they receive to improve their practice and morale is high. Staff feel that the culture of the school has improved significantly.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is effective. Pupils are becoming young citizens ready for their lives in modern Britain. They are supported to understand, respect and celebrate the diversity that exists within British society. For example, pupils' understanding of Islamic history and beliefs was enhanced by a recent visit to a local mosque.
- Parents are pleased with how the school is improving. For instance, some said: 'The vibe around the school is happy, positive and exciting'; 'New teachers ... high standard'; 'This year has been excellent ... I feel the school has improved.'

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not ensured that pupils at the school have benefited from a good education. After the previous inspection, the effectiveness of governance declined further. The governing body now has a new chair, clearer roles and responsibilities, and well-defined committees which actively review the work of the school.
- Members of the new governing body are confident, ambitious and determined to bring about further improvement. Governors challenge leaders. They check the accuracy of what they are told and they visit the school to gain first-hand evidence of the school's effectiveness. They have clear plans for how they will further improve their own work. The governing body now makes a positive contribution to the work of the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders make sure that staff complete regular training and receive up-to-date information on the care and protection of pupils. As a result, staff know their responsibilities for ensuring pupils' well-being. They also understand how to refer any concerns regarding pupils or adults.
- The leadership of safeguarding is shared between a group of staff, which means that expertise is readily available to deal with child protection issues. Leaders know how to make links with other agencies and how to maintain effective safeguarding records. Governors check the safeguarding work of the school carefully.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The main reason teaching requires improvement is that the effectiveness of teachers' work varies between classes. This variation is particularly pronounced in relation to teachers' use of assessment. Some teachers are skilled at reshaping teaching in

response to what pupils can and cannot do. However, others are not. As a result, there is significant variation in the extent to which teachers use assessment to ensure that teaching meets pupils' needs.

- A second reason is that teachers do not always make sure that planned tasks are challenging. In some instances, pupils told inspectors that their work was too easy. As a result, their progress is inhibited, and teachers do not make best use of valuable learning time. In particular, the most able pupils are not provided with the level of challenge that is necessary for them to achieve greater depth in their studies.
- A third reason teaching requires improvement is because, over time, it is not enabling disadvantaged pupils to learn as well as other pupils. Teaching for this group of pupils is improving due to a recent focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this change.
- Despite these factors, teaching has improved significantly during the current school year. Almost all teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection. They are brimming with ideas, a desire to help the school to improve and a wide experience on which to draw. Teachers are planning learning more effectively than in the past. This is enabling pupils to make greater gains in their learning, which has increased their enjoyment of school.
- Teaching assistants play an important part in supporting pupils' learning. Their assistance is enabling pupils with SEND to flourish.
- Teachers are making much better use of information on the attainment of pupils to plan teaching. They also apply the school's assessment and feedback policy dutifully. Despite this, weaknesses remain in the extent to which teachers use their ongoing assessment of pupils to modify and reshape teaching.
- In reading, teachers now use high-quality texts that are matched carefully to pupils' abilities. They use a variety of activities and strategies to develop pupils' reading skills. Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge when they teach pupils phonics.
- Teachers use their secure knowledge of mathematics to help pupils to develop strong mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- Teaching in science is strong, in part due to the strong leadership of the subject coordinator. From being a weakness at the previous inspection, science teaching has been transformed this year.
- Teaching in history is effective. Staff guide pupils to think about significant events, such as the Great Fire of London, and to consider claims and counter-claims made by different commentators.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils told inspectors that bullying is not an issue. They said that it happens rarely. They said that homophobic bullying does not happen.

- Pupils are self-confident. They were happy to meet with inspectors to discuss their learning and to share their views of the school.
- Pupils act as ambassadors for the school, such as through roles on the sports council. In their roles on the 'gift team', they lead worship once a week among their peers.
- Pupils know that their views matter and that leaders will act on the views they express through completed questionnaires.
- Staff and leaders keep the physical environment safe for pupils.
- Pupils know how to be successful learners. They work well in groups as well as independently. Parents praised the school for celebrating pupils' efforts and achievements. As one parent said, 'It is lovely to see so many pupils receiving certificates for their hard work.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- During the inspection, inspectors found that pupils were polite, well-mannered and respectful. Pupils who met with inspectors said that they are happy at school. They enjoy lessons and the many extra-curricular activities on offer.
- Pupils are clear about the guidelines and sanctions set out in the school's behaviour policy. They said that behaviour is mostly positive. Most parents agreed that behaviour is now good. Leaders keep careful records that enable them to monitor pupils' behaviour. They respond appropriately when there is a deterioration in a pupil's conduct. This has led to a considerable improvement to the behaviour of some pupils who have misbehaved significantly in the past.
- In recent years, some pupils have not attended school as much as they should. Due to a range of actions, pupils' attendance is improving rapidly. Leaders monitor pupils' attendance closely. They respond effectively when they notice a decline in the attendance of individuals or groups of pupils. Leaders ensure that support is available for individual pupils when needed. This has enabled them to significantly reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school during the current school year.
- Almost all pupils are punctual at the beginning of the school day. Pupils' late arrival at school is not accepted without good reason. The playground gate is locked promptly, in time for registration. Pupils are attentive and respond quickly to instructions. They are quick to move to their lessons and eager to continue their studies.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In the years following the previous inspection, pupils' outcomes declined because staffing turbulence resulted in weak teaching. Pupils leaving the school were not typically ready for secondary school. For instance, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined in key stage 2 in 2018 was low. Due to strong improvement in the quality of leadership and teaching this year, current pupils are making much stronger progress across a range of subjects.

Nonetheless, the legacy of underachievement and some inconsistent teaching mean that there is still ground to make up.

- Leaders' information indicates that current pupils' outcomes are improving. This information was supported by the quality of work in pupils' books and observations of pupils' learning. Pupils in Year 6 are much better prepared for secondary school than their predecessors from recent years. Nevertheless, in key stages 1 and 2, some disadvantaged pupils and some of the most able pupils are not learning as successfully as they should.
- Pupils with SEND are making good progress from their starting points. This is because teachers and teaching assistants cater effectively for the needs of these pupils. It is also due to the leadership provided by the SENCo, which ensures that these pupils learn well.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the standard required in the phonics screening check was average in 2018. Better teaching of letter sounds, along with wider improvement to the teaching of reading across the school, is helping pupils to become keen readers who use their knowledge of phonics well to read unfamiliar words. Less-able readers, for instance in Year 2 and Year 3, understand the importance of regular reading to consolidate and refine their skills. Pupils can talk about fiction that excites them. They enjoy when their teachers read to them as a class.
- Pupils are becoming adept at mathematical problem solving and reasoning. They approach mathematical calculations with confidence. Due to improved teaching, pupils are becoming more accurate and fluent at completing mathematical calculations. They told inspectors that they enjoy mathematics.
- In English, pupils present their work much better than in the past. This improvement is reflected most in the quality of pupils' handwriting. Pupils are also being supported to use grammar and punctuation more accurately.
- Pupils have also developed the quality and fluency of their writing. They write about the settings, characters and atmosphere of stories with confidence. Staff now have higher expectations of pupils, which is leading to improvement. This is helping, for example, pupils to demonstrate greater stamina and resilience when writing for sustained periods of time.
- Pupils are developing their vocabulary successfully. For example, in geography in key stage 2, they can talk accurately about the source, tributary and valley of a river.
- In science, pupils are developing enquiring minds. Teachers are enthusing pupils about science by providing them with important knowledge and understanding, and by making them aware of potential scientific careers. Pupils in key stage 1 learn to identify the differences between some bird species and the importance of habitat and food in their ecology. In key stage 2, pupils are developing the skills to hypothesise and test their ideas, for instance regarding the temperature at which materials will change state.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Staff provide children with a wide choice of play activities in the Reception class but do not make certain that all learning is challenging enough. Children occupy themselves sensibly but, on occasion, do not learn as much as they should. They make better progress when taught directly by staff.
- Leaders ensure that the early years is included in whole-school training and self-evaluation. They enable early years staff to benefit from advice from the local authority.
- Following a period of decline in children's attainment, the school's information indicates that the proportion of children learning well is much improved this year. Many more children are ready for Year 1 than in the past. Nevertheless, leaders have a limited knowledge of the specific aspects of teaching and learning in the early years that they should improve further.
- Staff participate fully in moderation events with other schools and the local authority, to make sure that their assessments of children's progress are accurate.
- Staff talk gently with children and use a wide range of interesting vocabulary to help extend their speaking and thinking skills. Staff plan a curriculum that gives children opportunities to talk, read, write, count and be physically active. During the inspection, children were happy to talk to inspectors about their activities.
- Staff arrange the classroom and outdoor area well to support learning. Children explore and make choices for themselves confidently.
- Staff make successful links with parents, including when children first join the school.

School details

Unique reference number	119656
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10087848

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Telling
Headteacher	Mr Darren Mussell
Telephone number	01254 233 019
Website	www.sasj.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@sasj.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 January 2017

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A minority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average.
- Children start at the school in the Reception Year.
- There is a separately registered out-of-school club on site. It did not form part of this inspection.
- The governing body has been formally reconstituted since the previous inspection. Almost all governors are new. The chair of governors is new to her role.

- Almost all teachers at the school are new since the previous inspection, many of whom, including the deputy headteacher and a newly qualified teacher, started in September 2018.
- The most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in November 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' activities throughout the school. They conducted some observations jointly with the headteacher.
- One inspector heard pupils from Year 2 and Year 3 read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and when they arrived at school, moved between classrooms and at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met regularly with the headteacher throughout the inspection to discuss his reviews of the school and plans for improvement. Inspectors also met with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils around the school. One inspector met with a random sample of eight pupils from Year 3 to Year 6.
- Inspectors held meetings with the subject leaders for English, mathematics, science, geography and history. Inspectors scrutinised samples of pupils' workbooks in each of these subjects to consider pupils' learning and progress this year.
- Inspectors met with the SENCo and with the leader for interventions.
- The lead inspector met with two advisers from Lancashire local authority who are supporting the school. He also spoke by telephone with the director of education for the Diocese of Salford.
- The lead inspector met with six governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered responses from 21 staff to an Ofsted survey.
- Inspectors reviewed the 43 responses from parents to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire and the 23 free-text comments. Inspectors spoke with some parents as they brought their children to school on the first day of the inspection. The lead inspector held a meeting with one parent at their request.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents provided by leaders, including information about pupils' progress, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors reviewed the content of the school's website and a sample of school policies and curriculum documents.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' records of the checks completed on adults' suitability to work with pupils at the school and sampled recruitment records and safeguarding files.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tim Sherriff	Ofsted Inspector
Lynne Ryder	Ofsted Inspector

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