

Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School

Poulsom Drive, Bootle, Merseyside L30 2NR

Inspection dates

15–16 May 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Weak leadership has led to a decline in pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders' plans to improve the school do not focus sharply enough on what success will look like for pupils.
- Leaders have an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching. They rarely evaluate the impact of their actions on pupils' progress and attainment.
- Senior leaders have provided governors with inaccurate, and sometimes misleading, information. As a result, governors have not been able to hold senior leaders to account for the decline in standards.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and often fail to plan lessons that build on pupils' prior learning. As a result, pupils' attainment and progress are below average and show little signs of improvement.
- The poorly taught curriculum means pupils have limited opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills across a range of subjects.
- Pupils are not given the opportunity to develop their writing skills across other subjects.
- Subject leaders have not been provided with the necessary support or guidance to carry out their roles effectively. The checks that they make on the quality of pupils' work are ineffective because they do not fully consider the impact of teaching on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is inadequate. Some pupils display poor behaviour in lessons and while moving around school. Many members of staff feel unsupported by senior leaders when dealing with challenging behaviour.
- Pupils' attendance is too low and the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school is too high.
- Teachers often fail to provide challenging work for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Many of these pupils make slow progress in their learning.
- The activities that staff plan in the early years sometimes fail to promote children's progress and independence.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils are friendly and polite. They enjoy school and are safe and well looked after.
- Teachers effectively support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently address weaknesses in leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that improvement plans are precise and are clear about what the impact should be
 - providing subject leaders with appropriate support and guidance so that they can carry out their roles effectively
 - ensuring that governors are provided with accurate information about pupils' achievement so that they can hold senior leaders to account
 - ensuring that the additional funding the school receives for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND is used effectively
 - providing effective support for staff to help them deal with challenging behaviour.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the curriculum, including in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in a range of subjects
 - providing more challenge for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
 - ensuring that teachers plan activities that build on what pupils already know
 - ensuring that teaching across the curriculum enables pupils to achieve well in a range of subjects
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, by:
 - ensuring that all pupils behave well during lessons and breaktimes
 - improving overall attendance and reducing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in the early years by routinely providing children with a wide range of exciting opportunities to develop their independence, knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning.

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

Inadequate

- Leaders have not acted quickly enough to address the weakness in teaching, learning and assessment that were identified at the previous inspection. As a result, there has been a significant decline in the school's performance. Teaching and pupils' outcomes are inadequate.
- School leaders have gathered a wide range of information to help them improve the quality of teaching. However, they have not used the evidence that they have collected to make accurate, well-informed judgements about the quality of education at the school. Their evaluations of pupils' work and the quality of teaching are overgenerous and often fail to identify what action is required to improve pupils' achievement.
- Leaders' actions have had too little impact on pupils' weak progress across key stage 2. Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has remained below the national average and shows some small signs of improvement but not enough to ensure that pupils are well prepared for key stage 2.
- Leaders have not ensured that the pupil premium funding has been used effectively to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders do not know which strategies have been effective because they do not measure the impact of their actions against pupils' achievement. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are not catching up with other pupils nationally.
- The leadership of SEND is ensuring that pupils make small steps of progress from their starting points. However, few pupils make the progress of which they are capable. This is because leaders do not ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need to address gaps in learning.
- Senior leaders have not provided subject leaders with sufficient training, guidance or support. Nor have they provided enough time for some subject leaders to carry out their roles. Consequently, subject leaders do not have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are learning in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Many staff members do not feel well supported by senior leaders, particularly when dealing with disruptive pupils. They stated that leaders are inconsistent in their responses to poor behaviour and are too quick to make excuses.
- Pupils enjoy learning about a wide range of interesting topics. However, weaknesses in teaching mean that they are not able to capitalise on the broad range of subjects that they cover. A lack of sufficient challenge in the delivery of the curriculum has led to their weak progress in a number of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Pupils' broader curriculum experiences effectively promote British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils enjoyed completing their art and design topic linked to European landmarks as well as participating in an employability day.
- Pupils benefit from engaging in a wide range of sporting activities. Close links have been made with a local football team to improve opportunities for participation in a

wide range of sports including football, gymnastics, martial arts and swimming.

- Parents and carers are generally supportive of the school. Those who expressed their views on Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were positive about the care, guidance and support provided by staff at the school.
- The local authority and representatives of the Archdiocese of Liverpool have worked with school leaders. Records of visits by the local authority indicate that they have provided the school with support and advised them where to make immediate improvements to the school. However, their actions have not had any impact on improving teaching or pupils' outcomes. As a result, external support has not been effective.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- A review of governance has been completed since the previous inspection. A new chair and vice chair of governors have taken up their respective roles since the start of this academic year.
- Minutes from governors' meetings indicate that they are now asking more-challenging questions of senior leaders than has previously been the case. However, inspectors found that information provided to them was factually inaccurate and lacked detail. Over time, governors have accepted information provided to them from senior leaders without questioning the reliability of what they are told.
- Since the previous inspection, governors have not held senior leaders to account well enough in relation to pupils' weak progress and declining standards. Actions taken have had too little impact on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Governors have little understanding of how the pupil premium fund is being used to support disadvantaged pupils. They do not challenge leaders about the impact of their actions well enough. For example, governors could not identify the difference that the new mathematical initiative is having on pupils' progress.
- Leaders and governors have continued to promote the Catholic ethos of the school effectively. They have ensured that relationships with parents remain strong.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and the school meets statutory requirements. Leaders have ensured that all members of staff have received appropriate and up-to-date training. Staff understand their responsibilities for ensuring the safety and well-being of all pupils. The school works well with several partner agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive timely support.
- Safeguarding records are detailed. They show that staff make a strong contribution to protecting pupils. Staff are vigilant in carrying out their responsibilities. Leaders regularly engage with national charities and external agencies and provide pupils and staff with regular safeguarding updates. Pupils feel safe in school. Parents expressed no concerns about the safety of their children while in school.

- Several senior leaders and governors are trained in safer recruitment. Appropriate checks are made on the suitability of all adults who work in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teaching is inadequate because it limits the progress of pupils.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are low. Teachers rarely plan work which builds on what pupils already know or can do. This frequently results in work being set for pupils that is too easy or too hard. Consequently, pupils are making inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers' weak planning means that much of the work that they set is the same for all pupils. As a result, teaching is not meeting the needs of many disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who did not reach the expected standards at the end of key stage 1. These pupils are not making enough progress to make up for gaps in their learning. The most able pupils are also affected by teachers' lack of challenge. This means that they make weak progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- In many of the classrooms they visited, inspectors observed pupils becoming distracted and disengaged from their learning. This behaviour was not challenged by teachers, who continued to teach, often over low-level noise which distracted other pupils from their learning.
- Teachers provide pupils with work that limits their abilities. Too often, pupils lack the ability to write at length and with creativity because teachers are too prescriptive in what they want pupils to write. Pupils have few opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum. This limits the progress that they make in this subject.
- The work in pupils' mathematics books shows that they make limited progress across key stage 1 and key stage 2. Weak planning and a lack of challenge to almost all groups mean that pupils' learning is superficial and does not prepare them for the next area of mathematical study.
- There have been improvements to the teaching of phonics. This resulted in a greater proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018. However, many pupils in key stage 1 continue to spell simple words incorrectly. This is mainly because teachers do not ensure that pupils use their phonics knowledge well enough in their written work.
- The teaching of reading is not effective. Activities are not planned well enough to meet pupils' needs and few pupils read with confidence and expression. Staff often fail to ensure that pupils choose books that are matched well to their ability.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are friendly and polite. Pupils who spoke to the inspectors were courteous and

open in their views about the school. Pupils said that they enjoy attending school and feel safe while in the care of the staff.

- The curriculum is successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about the importance of tolerance and respect. They demonstrated a clear understanding of why racism is wrong. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are aware of how to stay safe while in school and while using the internet. They learn how to stay fit and healthy. They enjoy the wide range of sports that are available to them at school.
- Attitudes to learning are not as good as they could be. This is mainly because teachers' expectations about pupils' behaviour and how well they can learn are not high enough. Many pupils told inspectors that their work was often too easy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Most pupils try hard and behave well in school. However, many pupils also said that they have to really concentrate in lessons because some pupils often disrupt learning. Inspectors witnessed such low-level behaviour in classrooms during the inspection.
- At playtimes, inspectors observed behaviour that was boisterous and rough. They observed instances of pupils climbing on benches and shouting inappropriately at their peers. This inappropriate behaviour was reflected in the high number of concerns that were expressed by pupils in the Ofsted survey.
- Many members of staff raised concerns about pupils' behaviour in Ofsted's staff survey. They were also critical about the support that they receive from senior leaders when dealing with challenging behaviour.
- Absence rates have been above the national average for the past three years. Rates of persistent absences are also above average, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. This represents a further barrier to pupils' academic progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Weaknesses in the quality of leadership and teaching over time have resulted in pupils making inadequate progress. In key stage 1 and 2, too many pupils are making weak progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been below average in most subject areas in recent years. Very few pupils have achieved greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics. Pupils start Year 3 ill-equipped to meet the demands of the key stage 2 curriculum.
- Between 2016 and 2018, pupils' progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been weak. The progress that pupils made placed the school in the bottom 20% when compared to other primary schools nationally.
- Assessment information and the work in current pupils' books indicate that few pupils are making enough progress in reading, writing or mathematics. Very few pupils make

strong progress. As a result, pupils are not catching up with other pupils nationally.

- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved over four consecutive years. However, there is little evidence to show that teachers have built on this improvement to raise pupils' overall standards in reading and writing.
- Weak planning and ineffective use of additional funding have led to disadvantaged pupils making inadequate progress across the school. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 is much lower than for other pupils nationally. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is not diminishing.
- The most able pupils are not challenged to reach the higher standards or greater depth in reading and writing. They do not achieve as well as they should in a wide range of subjects across the curriculum. This is because teachers' expectations are low, and the work that they set lacks challenge.
- Few pupils with SEND make the progress of which they are capable because teachers' expectations are too low.
- The low standards that pupils achieve at the end of key stage 2 mean that they are not well prepared for the next stage of their education when they move to secondary school.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been low over recent years. However, in 2018 this improved. This represented stronger progress for most children than has previously been the case.
- There have been recent improvements to the quality of leadership in the early years. Staff have been trained thoroughly in developing their understanding of the learning needs of the children, particularly those who enter the Nursery with low communication, language and literacy skills, including those in the resourced provision. This is helping to ensure that children are now making better progress.
- Children enjoy attending school. Adults make learning fun and interesting. For example, children engage in discussions about how slime feels; they chat about the creatures they find on their bug hunts and they cooperate while using the go-carts. Children use stop watches to time one another, indicating when it is time to let the next child have a go.
- Leaders are currently developing the school's approach to teaching during times in the day when children are free to choose their own learning activity. Leaders have identified, through their own evaluation, that children do not always make the progress of which they are capable during these periods.
- Leaders have recognised that children are sometimes overwhelmed by the large areas to which they have access. This can sometimes lead to a loss of learning focus. Leaders are actively addressing these in their plans to improve the provision through a more-focused approach to the use of additional adults to develop children's skills and knowledge in a range of curriculum experiences.

- The teaching of phonics in the early years builds and consolidates upon prior learning. Children have many opportunities to develop their reading and writing. Classrooms are rich with high-quality texts that children have access to. Teachers celebrate and share many examples of children's work on colourful displays around the classrooms.
- Children are guided skilfully to their learning challenges in the Nursery class, whereas in the Reception class sometimes children want to play and are not as keen to become involved in activities that promote writing and number. Relationships between children and adults across the early years are strong. Children enjoy playing and learning. Most children behave well. Adults work with children to model play and encourage the sharing of the more popular resources.
- Leaders have a strong understanding of the safeguarding duties and monitor carefully the levels of supervision of children across the Reception and Nursery classes.
- Staff have received appropriate training and are aware of their responsibilities to keep children safe. All members of staff in the early years have received training in paediatric first aid.
- Strong links have been made with families. Teachers share regular updates about children's achievements with parents. Parents are kept well-informed about the progress of their children.

School details

Unique reference number	104910
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10087809

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	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Val Leatherbarrow
Headteacher	Mr Matthew Byrne
Telephone number	0151 525 7497
Website	www.holyspiritcatholicprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin.holyspirit@schools.sefton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2016

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- There is a specially resourced provision for a very small number of children with SEND in the Nursery, run on behalf of the local authority.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection of religious education took place in January 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the two assistant headteachers. Inspectors met with several subject leaders and the leader of the early years.
- Inspectors met with a representative of Sefton local authority and a representative of the Archdiocese of Liverpool.
- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups; some of these were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors viewed examples of pupils' work from a range of curriculum areas. They spoke to pupils about their work in the classes they visited and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors met with pupils and observed their behaviour in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors scrutinised records of assessments, the school' self-evaluation and school improvement planning. They examined a wide range of documentation in relation to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the 20 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 13 free-text responses. Inspectors considered the 24 responses to the staff survey and 23 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

John Donald, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Howard

Ofsted Inspector

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