

Inspection of Holy Trinity VC School

Bank Top, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 2RW

Inspection dates: 12–13 November 2019

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
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What is it like to attend this school?

Holy Trinity VC School bases its work on three words: kindness, respect and effort. These values are reflected in everything the school does. Pupils really enjoy coming to the school. They feel safe, happy and valued. Staff know pupils and their families very well. Pupils said that the changes made by the headteacher and her staff have made Holy Trinity a better place to be. Parents, carers and staff echo this view. For example, one parent described the school as a 'beacon of kindness on the hill'.

The behaviour of pupils around the school is good. Pupils are friendly, polite and respectful. They work hard and are keen to answer questions from staff. They are excited by their learning and they are proud of their achievements. Leaders take any incidents of bullying seriously. They work sensitively with pupils to resolve any concerns. Pupils see all staff as trusted adults whom they can speak to and ask for help whenever necessary.

Staff work hard and hold high expectations of what pupils will achieve at the school. Pupils receive thoughtful extra help if they need it, particularly if they need to catch up with an aspect of their learning.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy a wide range of valuable extra activities. Many told us that they 'learn and have fun at the same time'. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their visits to museums, farms, concerts and beaches. Staff make sure that all pupils can take part in the activities if they want to.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders help teachers know what to teach and how to teach it in most subjects. Teachers build on what pupils have learned previously and help them to know more and remember more. For example, one pupil told us, 'We practice Ninja Maths. This helps us remember number facts even more quickly.' In the past, pupils have not achieved well in English, mathematics and science. Pupils are now learning well in these subjects because of improvements in the curriculum and in the leadership of the school. However, in history and geography teachers are still adapting plans and their teaching so that pupils learn new knowledge in a logical order.

Staff use simple and manageable ways to check what pupils have learned. They ask pupils questions to help them to summarise their knowledge and to make links between topics. Staff give pupils support if they find that work is too hard and make it more difficult when they find it too easy. In the early years, staff have started to work more closely with parents. They are keen to share how parents can help their children in their learning.

Learning to read is a priority from the moment children enter the Reception class. Pupils love reading. They cannot wait to tell their friends about characters and storylines from books. In Reception, children even practise reading to their toys.

Staff in the early years continually focus on children's reading and help bring books alive. For example, we saw children enjoying dressing up as skeletons in the role-play area as they acted out the story of 'Funnybones'.

Staff have a good understanding of how to teach pupils to read. Their skilful use of a new phonics programme led to a higher proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2018 and 2019. Staff match books carefully to the sounds and letters that pupils know. This helps pupils to read accurately and become increasingly confident and fluent. Staff quickly identify any pupil who is falling behind. These pupils are then able to catch up, and keep up, because staff give them appropriate support. From early years to Year 6, books and print are everywhere in the school. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about the books they have read and those that are read to them.

Everyone that we spoke with said that pupils' behaviour at the school has been transformed since the previous inspection. The headteacher set out her expectations when she joined the school and she made the rules very clear. Staff work hard to praise pupils' good behaviour. Staff supervise pupils well. Pupils play together happily and respect others. Pupils' personal, social and emotional development is a strength of the school. Pupils confidently share their ideas and feelings. Children in the early years have fun while learning. The attentive and caring staff help them to feel safe and confident. Staff ensure that children quickly become familiar with routines and expectations.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. They receive appropriate support from skilled staff. This allows pupils to learn well across subjects. Staff who run the nurture group are particularly successful at helping pupils to understand their feelings and emotions. They build pupils' confidence and self-esteem so that they are ready to learn and can cope with classroom routines.

Leaders and governors know the school well. A dedicated staff team supports them. They have worked hard to transform many aspects of the school in a short space of time. Together, they have improved the curriculum in many subjects, raised pupils' achievement and improved pupils' behaviour.

Leaders care about their staff and have taken considered steps to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils well and take their welfare and safety seriously. Staff are trained to quickly identify pupils who may be at risk of harm or need early help. Leaders follow up any concerns quickly. Staff provide many families with useful advice and support.

Leaders teach pupils about safety in assemblies and in their studies across the curriculum. Staff teach pupils to share any worries they may have. Staff take the

time to listen to pupils' views and to act on any concerns. This helps to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders, governors and staff have done much to review and improve the quality of education in subjects such as reading, mathematics, science and physical education (PE). However, the school's curriculum is not yet well enough planned and sequenced in history and geography. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculums for these subjects are carefully ordered so that pupils build securely on what they already know and understand.
- Historically, pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics have not been good enough at key stage 2. The English and mathematics curriculums are now planned well, and they help current pupils to know and remember more. Leaders need to ensure that the improvements to the English and mathematics curriculums enable pupils in Year 6 to gain the knowledge and skills that they need to make a successful start to the next stage of their education.
- Leaders need to ensure that parents are kept even more informed about their children's achievement and well-being. This will ensure that all parents can support their children's learning effectively.

The transition arrangements were used on this inspection to confirm that pupils benefit from a good-quality education.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	119357
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10110898
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dot Thomson
Headteacher	Kathryn Bolton
Website	http://www.holytrinitydarwen.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 May 2017

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up her post in September 2017.
- The number of pupils on the school roll has declined since the last inspection.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection of religious education was in June 2018.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We held several discussions with staff and leaders and visited lessons with the headteacher.
- We looked in detail at the curriculum in mathematics, science, history, PE and geography. We talked with leaders and teachers about these curriculums. We also talked with pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects. We also looked at pupils' work.
- The lead inspector talked with two members of the governing body, including the chair, to find out how they supported and challenged school leaders. He also met with the school improvement partner from the local authority to discuss the work

of the school.

- We checked safeguarding arrangements. We looked at the school's work to make staff and pupils aware of safeguarding issues. We also looked at safeguarding records to see how concerns over pupils' safety were recorded and followed up.
- We considered the four responses and four free-text responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. We also spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and reviewed school information about parental views.

Inspection team

James Blackwell, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector
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