

Inspection of St Anne's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School

Sandy Lane, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 2AN

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders at this school do not provide pupils with an acceptable standard of education. The continued instability in leadership and the teaching workforce has had a negative impact on pupils' learning and their experience of school life. Pupils have suffered excessive disruptions to their learning and experienced a number of disjointed curriculums. As a result, pupils have significant gaps in their knowledge. They do not achieve well and they are not prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have suffered the most. Leaders' expectations of these pupils have been too low. Leaders and governors have failed to ensure that these pupils have their needs accurately identified, assessed or met.

Interim leaders have raised their expectations of how pupils should behave. Most pupils behave well during lessons. However, pupils' behaviour at social times is more variable. Some pupils run through corridors and barge past others without due regard for the feelings or safety of others. Some staff do not have the necessary strategies that they need to deal with these issues effectively. This means that such behaviours go unchecked.

Although many pupils said that they feel safe and happy at school, some older pupils experience bullying and name-calling. These pupils are reluctant to tell their teachers about such incidents because they are fearful of any repercussions. However, leaders are aware of these issues. They are starting to take appropriate action to deal with bullying.

Pupils have access to extra-curricular opportunities such as choir and sports clubs. They also take on leadership roles when they are older. Pupils are blessed with their very own natural waterfall which runs through part of the school's extensive grounds. They enjoy seeing wild deer and squirrels roam alongside the playground.

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

For many years, pupils have been blighted by the relentless turmoil in leadership and staffing. Even during this inspection, senior leaders were serving in an interim capacity through fixed-term external support arrangements. The school is currently too dependent on external support. It lacks the capacity from within to improve the weaknesses that it has.

Over time, pupils have suffered a series of poorly thought-through curriculums. This has caused pupils to develop significant gaps in their knowledge. The interim executive headteacher has quickly taken effective steps to address these curriculum issues. She has recently redesigned an overarching curriculum structure for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Subject leaders, with external support, have also started to set out clearer guidance for teachers on what knowledge to teach and how to deliver the

more ambitious subject content. However, these improvements are a work in progress. Teachers are still getting to grips with the new curriculum expectations. It is far too soon to see the impact of interim leaders' actions on pupils' achievement.

While work on the school's curriculum is still underway, teachers' understanding of what they should do to check pupils' learning or to establish gaps in pupils' knowledge is weak. In addition, teachers lack the information and expertise to adapt their lessons to account for the significant knowledge gaps in pupils' knowledge. Thus, teachers deliver more complex subject content when pupils do not have the underlying knowledge to learn it. This means that, despite the higher expectations set for their learning, pupils continue to achieve poorly.

Leaders and governors have not taken sufficient measures to reduce the impact of staff turbulence on pupils with SEND. Information on pupils' needs has not been used well over time or has fallen through the cracks whenever staffing changes. This has led to excessive delays and failures in identifying, assessing or meeting pupils' additional needs. Leaders' efforts to improve the systems to support pupils with SEND are still in their infancy. Teachers do not have sufficient expertise to adapt the delivery of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. Curriculum guidance is also lacking in this area. As a result, pupils with SEND do not achieve well.

Leaders have not ensured that there is an appropriate curriculum in place in the early years. This leaves teachers unclear on what they should teach children or when to teach new knowledge. Additionally, leaders have not given due consideration to how children in the Reception Year will be taught as part of a mixed-age class. Therefore, teachers are ill-equipped to deliver the early years curriculum effectively. Consequently, children experience a jumbled series of lessons that do not provide the necessary foundations for the rest of their schooling.

Leaders have introduced a structured phonics programme. However, teachers move through this programme too quickly and before pupils are ready for new content. They also teach pupils too many new sounds at the same time which overwhelms pupils and prevents them from building their knowledge steadily. Pupils read books that are not well matched to the sounds that they know. Although pupils who struggle to read receive extra help, this does not always have the intended impact. This is because teachers have not received sufficient guidance and training on how to provide effective additional support to pupils. This means that pupils who need more support to close the gaps in their phonic knowledge do not catch up in their learning of sounds quickly enough.

Leaders have recently improved standards of pupils' behaviour. Classrooms are generally calm places to learn. However, behaviour during social times is less positive. This is because behaviour expectations at these times are not well established. It is also because some staff do not have the strategies and training that they need to address behaviour issues well.

Due to the shortcomings in the curriculum, pupils have not developed a secure understanding of fundamental British values. However, interim leaders have taken

positive steps to improve the curriculum that underpins pupils' broader development. For example, in recent weeks, leaders have introduced a mental well-being programme to develop pupils' resilience. However, leaders' recent improvements are only at the start of making up for historic shortfalls in promoting pupils' readiness for life in a diverse society.

Interim leaders engage well with staff and have boosted staff's morale. They have brought about an improved sense of well-being that is appreciated by staff.

There has also been turbulence in the membership of the governing body. This has had a detrimental impact on the work of governors. Nonetheless, they have ultimately failed to take purposeful action to improve the school since the last inspection. Many of the previously recommended areas for improvement from the last inspection remain issues for the school. Governors do not gather the information that they need to evaluate the impact of senior leaders' work objectively. They are not aware of the true extent of the weaknesses that are impacting pupils' achievement, particularly those with SEND. This limits their ability to respond to any weaknesses and provide well-informed strategic direction.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff know how to identify a concern about a pupil's welfare. Staff report their concerns swiftly. Leaders are diligent in their responses to any safeguarding concerns. They maintain detailed records of the actions that they take. Where necessary, leaders engage well with external agencies to secure the extra support that pupils and their families might need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when they are using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school is over-reliant on various forms of external support and the current interim leadership arrangements are temporary. This means that there is a lack of capacity from within to tackle the weaknesses that are impacting pupils' ability to achieve well. Governors must ensure that they take urgent action to secure stable leadership capacity throughout the school.
- Leaders have not ensured that pupils with SEND have had their needs identified or met quickly enough. They have not equipped staff with the skills that they need to adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This means that pupils with SEND receive a poor quality of education. Leaders must ensure that staff are well trained to adapt the delivery of the curriculum. They must also ensure that pupils have their needs identified and met within a reasonable timeframe.

- In some subjects, leaders have not developed sufficient curriculum guidance. This sometimes means that teachers are not clear on the specific knowledge that pupils need to learn and how best to deliver it. As a result, pupils do not develop their knowledge securely over time. Leaders must identify the specific knowledge that they want pupils to learn. They must also ensure that teachers are given sufficient curriculum guidance on how best to deliver learning in these subjects.
- Teachers do not know what assessment strategies to use to establish the gaps that pupils have in their learning nor do they know how to adapt their teaching to overcome these deficits in learning. This means that pupils are too often taught new knowledge that they do not have the fundamental building blocks to learn. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the skills to identify and remedy gaps in pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not deliver phonics lessons and catch-up support well. This means that pupils do not acquire a secure knowledge of sounds as quickly and easily as they should. Leaders must ensure that teachers receive the training and guidance that they need to help pupils learn to read fluently as quickly as they can.
- Leaders have not ensured that children in the early years learn a suitable curriculum. Additionally, leaders have not given enough consideration to how these children will learn as part of a mixed-age class. As a result, children do not build the necessary foundations of knowledge that they need to be ready for key stage 1. Leaders must urgently review the curriculum to ensure that children in the early years gain the knowledge that they need for future learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that there are well-established routines and expectations of behaviour in place during social times. As a result, pupils' behaviour is sometimes boisterous. Some pupils show a lack of regard for others. Leaders should ensure that they establish clear expectations of behaviour during social times and equip all staff with the strategies that they need to uphold these expectations consistently well.
- Governors do not appropriately evaluate the impact of leaders' work on pupils' achievement. This means that governors are not aware of the extent of the weaknesses in the school. Governors must ensure that they improve their oversight of the school so that they can provide well-informed strategic direction and hold leaders to account for their actions.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

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	119656
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256089
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	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Samantha Camm (Acting Chair)
Headteacher	Sinead Colbeck (Interim Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.sasj.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There has been significant turbulence in staffing since the last inspection. An interim executive headteacher and an interim deputy headteacher are in post until the end of the academic year. There have been several different special educational needs coordinators since the last inspection. The current postholder is temporary.
- The chair and vice-chair of the governing body were both serving in an acting capacity at the time of inspection.
- The school is part of an associate arrangement with an academy trust. This is a fixed-term arrangement that is due to expire at the end of the academic year. The school also receives external support from the local authority and different hubs.
- The governing body oversees the before- and after-school club.
- The most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2016.
- Leaders make use of registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history, science, physical education and mathematics. They met with subject leaders and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' and children's work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning. The lead inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also considered other curriculum subjects. They spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in these subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with a group of governors. The lead inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority and the diocese and leaders of the academy trust that the school has a fixed-term partnership agreement with.
- Inspectors talked to staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about safeguarding and their wider experience of school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. They discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

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