

St Joseph's RC Primary School, Todmorden

Wellington Road, Todmorden, Lancashire OL14 5HP

Inspection dates

15–16 January 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Despite the leadership's substantial improvements to the quality of teaching, it is not consistently good. The quality of teaching in key stage 1 is particularly variable. As a result, pupils' progress is not strong across year groups and subjects.
- Due to historical weaknesses in teaching, pupils have gaps in their learning. As current pupils are not making consistently strong progress, too few reach the standard expected for their age.
- Leaders have improved the teaching of mathematics considerably. However, too often, pupils, especially the most able and those in key stage 1, receive work which is too easy. Additionally, the opportunities pupils have to develop their reasoning skills are limited.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to improve their writing. Teachers' expectations of pupils' writing in subjects other than English are not high enough. As a result, pupils' progress in writing is not maximised.
- Leaders' plans for improvement lack precision and do not focus tightly on improvements to pupils' outcomes. This means that leaders, including governors, are not able to hold members of staff to account effectively for their work.
- Leaders do not make rigorous and timely checks on the difference they have made to the quality of teaching in all priority areas. This includes the effective checking of teaching for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils have mixed views on reading for pleasure. Leaders have only been successful in motivating some pupils to read widely and often.
- Senior and middle leaders are not always taking sufficient responsibility for the curriculum areas they lead. They are often over-reliant on the headteacher or external bodies to lead improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have worked very hard to improve pupils' attendance rates. Their rigour in this area has increased attendance so that it is now above average.
- Leaders place pupils' personal development at the heart of the school's work. As a result, pupils are polite, responsible and confident.
- Leaders' work to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very effective. As a result, pupils show high levels of tolerance and empathy. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Teaching in the early years is good. This ensures that children make strong progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently good or better, and improve pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - improving the quality of teaching, particularly, in key stage 1
 - ensuring an appropriate level of challenge for pupils, especially the most able and those in key stage 1, in mathematics
 - providing frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics
 - enabling pupils to improve their writing
 - teachers having consistently high expectations of pupils' writing in all subjects
 - ensuring that reading comprehension activities are appropriately matched to pupils' needs
 - developing pupils' motivation to read more widely and frequently
 - improving the quality of teaching for pupils with SEND.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - all teaching is consistently good or better
 - leaders' improvement plans are focused tightly on improving pupils' outcomes
 - governors and senior leaders hold staff to account effectively for their work to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes
 - senior and middle leaders receive further professional development to enable them to take responsibility for improvements in teaching, learning and assessment in the curriculum areas they lead
 - leaders, including middle leaders, make rigorous and regular checks on, and evaluation of, the difference they have made to the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes, including for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- A new leadership team and new teachers joined the school in September 2017. They have faced considerable challenges, not least the high turnover of staff which has slowed the school's improvements. Despite this, leaders have been swift in ensuring improvements in a range of areas of the school's work. However, they have not ensured that the quality of teaching and current pupils' outcomes are consistently good.
- Leaders' plans for improvement identify appropriate priorities. However, their plans lack detail about how improvements will be secured. Their plans are not tightly linked to pupils' outcomes. This means that leaders and governors are not able to hold members of staff to account effectively for their work.
- Leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning are not rigorous enough. This is the case in a range of priority areas, including in mathematics and reading comprehension. Teachers do not receive quality guidance about how to improve their effectiveness and, therefore, inconsistencies remain. Moreover, leaders cannot evaluate the difference their actions have made or adjust their plans with any accuracy.
- Leaders have introduced systems which have ensured that teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment are accurate. They use this information well to identify pupils who are falling behind. However, teachers do not always use this information effectively to provide activities which represent a suitable level of challenge for pupils, particularly for the most able pupils in mathematics.
- The special educational needs coordinator has considerable expertise and is passionate about improving teaching and learning for pupils with SEND. He has established effective systems which enable the accurate identification of pupils' needs and their barriers to learning. He tracks the progress pupils make regularly. However, leaders do not currently check on the quality of teaching that pupils with SEND receive. Consequently, this is not consistently good.
- Leaders have prioritised improving disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. They have introduced additional teaching sessions which are aimed at building pupils' specific skills. Teaching assistants are beginning to measure the difference these sessions make to the pupils' progress. However, as this approach is in its infancy, leaders cannot be assured that they are maximising disadvantaged pupils' progress.
- Working together with teachers, leaders have recently reorganised the curriculum. They have focused heavily on providing pupils with learning and experiences, such as educational visits, which raise their aspirations. They have ensured that the curriculum is both broad and balanced. However, they have not checked on the quality of teaching and learning in wider curriculum subjects, such as science. As a result, this is variable and some pupils have considerable gaps in their learning.
- Leaders have ensured that the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is spent effectively. Specialist coaches provide high-quality lessons and after-school clubs for pupils, as well as professional development for members of staff. Leaders have broadened the range of activities on offer for pupils at lunchtimes and

after school. Through this, they have been successful in increasing pupils' participation in sports and physical activities.

- Through building partnerships with a range of bodies, including the diocese, the local authority, a teaching school and other local schools, leaders have put in place an intensive training programme for staff. This has been particularly successful in improving teachers' and teaching assistants' subject knowledge in mathematics. Members of staff appreciate the professional development opportunities available to them and feel very much valued. As a result, they are committed to improving the school's effectiveness.
- Leaders' fostering of pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is a strength of the school. Pupils have a secure knowledge of people from different cultures, backgrounds and faiths. This supports them effectively in forming tolerant views on different aspects of diversity. Pupils have a wealth of opportunity for spiritual development. For example, pupils in upper key stage 2 are challenged frequently to reflect on themes and issues, such as their compassion for those experiencing poverty.

Governance of the school

- Governors have developed well their knowledge and expertise in a range of priority areas. They have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and of the school's priorities. Their recruitment of skilled senior leaders and staff has been a crucial factor in improving the school's effectiveness.
- Governors have responded to the external review of governance by ensuring the school's financial stability. They have also developed their understanding of pupils' assessment information. Senior leaders provide governors with clear information about pupils' outcomes and attendance. Governors now use this well to challenge leaders about pupils' achievements.
- Governors have recognised that improving disadvantaged pupils' outcomes is a priority for the school. As a result, they have formed a focus group and are holding leaders to account for their response to the external review of pupil premium spending.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that a culture of safeguarding permeates all of the school's work. Staff are clear about how to keep children safe and are swift in reporting any concerns which may arise.
- Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding have effective relationships with pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Their records in respect of child protection are detailed and organised. They take prompt action to refer concerns to external agencies where appropriate. They are determined and assertive in challenging other agencies where they feel that a pupil's best interests are not being served well.
- Pupils who spoke to inspectors say they feel safe in the school. They demonstrate a good awareness of the risks they may face in different contexts, including when online, and they know how to avoid such dangers.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved considerably but remains variable across year groups and subjects. Examples of strong teaching are now evident. However, too often, particularly in key stage 1, teachers do not ensure that activities present pupils with an appropriate level of challenge.
- In mathematics, pupils' understanding is developed through the use of equipment and illustrative images, such as number lines. They also extend their skills through solving problems which have real-life contexts. However, the level of complexity contained within activities is often insufficient. Additionally, the opportunities pupils have for developing their reasoning skills are limited. Consequently, pupils struggle to explain and justify their mathematical thinking.
- Pupils' writing books show that they are gaining important writing skills and that they correct their errors, as directed by teachers. However, when pupils write in other subjects, such as history or science, the quality of their writing is often not maintained. In addition, pupils rarely improve their extended pieces of writing. Pupils', particularly the most able pupils', progress in writing is hindered by these factors.
- Pupils' views on reading are mixed. Some pupils are enthusiastic readers. They enjoy being transported to another place in their minds and value the learning which can be achieved through reading. However, some pupils are more reluctant to read and say they only do so when directed. Leaders have not been successful in motivating all pupils to read widely and often. Similarly, leaders have not ensured that the reading comprehension activities that pupils, particularly the most able pupils, receive are suitably challenging in all year groups.
- Pupils enjoy their learning in wider curriculum subjects, such as art and history. This is often because teachers design practical activities which develop pupils' subject-specific skills. Pupils are knowledgeable about some of the topics they have studied. However, their books show that, in some year groups, pupils are not consistently productive in their learning. Therefore, pupils have gaps in their learning.
- Too often, pupils with SEND have targets which are too broad. Additionally, for some pupils with SEND, teaching staff are not consistently mindful of their needs. Therefore, teaching is not adapted sufficiently and pupils' progress is hindered.
- Teaching assistants often show a high level of expertise in moving pupils' learning on. They are skilled in supporting individuals and providing additional sessions for small groups of pupils. However, there are times, particularly during whole-class teaching, when the difference they make is not maximised. This variability is linked to the quality of direction they receive from teachers.
- Pupils are keen to learn and, in most lessons, demonstrate positive attitudes. However, where activities are not well matched to their needs, their focus drifts. Learning time is also lost when pupils have to wait for the next activity.
- The teaching of phonics has been strengthened and is now effective. Pupils learn new sounds well and show confidence in reading unfamiliar words. Teaching staff have a detailed understanding of any gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. They use this to provide additional sessions which help pupils who are falling behind to catch up.

- Pupils speak positively about the homework they receive. They enjoy attending homework club and engaging in home learning tasks with their families. These contributions are celebrated in assemblies and in displays in the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have established a caring ethos in the school, which pupils reinforce through their kindness to others. Pupils are polite and show maturity in resolving disagreements independently.
- Pupils relish the opportunities they have to support younger pupils and to lead in specific areas. For example, pupil chaplains, 'mini vinnies' (pupil chaplains for younger pupils), play leaders, team captains and school council representatives enjoy making a valuable contribution to their school.
- Leaders have placed considerable emphasis on supporting pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles. They have introduced a number of strategies to encourage pupils to take physical exercise, such as the routine of walking or running a mile every day. Teachers also encourage healthy eating through science lessons and experiments which expose the consequences of poor dietary choices. Many pupils start the day with a healthy breakfast and team games at breakfast club.
- Pupils develop empathy for others through regular opportunities to raise funds for chosen charities. Along with pupils' learning through assemblies and lessons, this contributes well to pupils' moral development. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is also fostered well through the range of musical instruments they learn in peripatetic lessons.
- Teachers use learning in a variety of subjects to support pupils' emotional development and resilience. For example, linked to their learning about Beowulf, Year 6 pupils were able to think deeply about the challenges they may face in the future and how best to overcome them. However, due to the historical weaknesses in teaching, pupils have gaps in their knowledge in wider curriculum subjects, such as history and geography. This means that pupils are not equipped to engage in considered debate and discussion regarding a range of topics.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well and this maintains a calm and orderly atmosphere in the school. Leaders have ensured that instances of poor behaviour have reduced considerably and are now rare.
- Leaders have worked very hard to secure vital improvements to pupils' attendance rates. Pupils recognise the value of their education and are now motivated to attend regularly and on time. Leaders follow up any pupil absences or lateness with rigour. They also provide tailored support for families where appropriate. As a result of their strategic approach, leaders have been successful in reducing rates of absence to below the national averages. Leaders recognise that, despite an improving trend, some

disadvantaged pupils' attendance rates are too low and they have plans in place to tackle this.

- Instances of bullying and derogatory language are rare. Pupils, parents, carers and staff who made their views known agree that pupils are safe in the school. One pupil reflected the views of many, saying to inspectors, 'Everyone is welcome here.'

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Although pupils' outcomes have improved since the last inspection, current pupils are not making consistently strong progress. Teachers have been effective in filling many of the gaps in pupils' learning which were the legacy of historical weaknesses in teaching. However, considerable proportions of pupils across year groups are not working at the standards expected for their age.
- Published outcomes for the end of key stage 2 in 2018 showed improvement in comparison to those in 2017. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading was above average for the past two years. In writing, the improvements seen in 2018 ensured that pupils' attainment was broadly average. However, in mathematics, pupils' attainment has been variable over the past three years and was below average in 2018.
- Key stage 1 pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has been below average for the past three years. This leaves approximately half of the pupils entering key stage 2 without the knowledge, understanding and skills they need for the next stage of their education.
- Progress for pupils with SEND is variable. Some pupils with SEND, particularly those in key stage 2, make strong progress. However, some pupils' targets lack precision and this hampers their progress.
- As is the case for other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils' progress is improving but remains variable. Disadvantaged pupils are often selected for additional teaching sessions. However, leaders' checking of the effectiveness of these sessions is in its infancy. As a result, disadvantaged pupils rarely make enough progress to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Following improvements implemented by leaders, the teaching of phonics now supports pupils to develop early reading skills well. Pupils, including lower-attaining pupils, show confidence in decoding unfamiliar words. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check rose in 2018 and was above average.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have strengthened the quality of teaching in the early years and this is now effective. Adults gather detailed information about each child's achievements and interests. They use this to design activities which are well matched to children's needs. As a result, children make strong progress.
- A considerable proportion of children enter the Nursery class with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. The strong progress children now make in the early

years means that the proportion reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception, is in line with the national average.

- The early years leaders have identified priorities for improvement and have acted swiftly to address these areas. The early years teacher has been particularly successful in coaching other adults within the setting to improve their practice. Adults now show a high level of skill in knowing when and how to move children's learning on and when to step back to foster their independence. Adults' questioning is effective in stimulating talk from children and in encouraging them to solve their own problems.
- Children find the activities on offer enticing and, because of this, they remain focused for extended periods. The activities in the outdoor learning area are particularly appealing: despite wet and cold weather conditions during the inspection, large numbers of children chose to learn outside. Many children were drawn to the large-scale water activities, where they enjoyed working together to create their own water-flow system.
- In both the indoor and outdoor environments, children consolidate and extend their skills in phonics, writing and mathematics. Adults design activities well so that children can develop a range of skills through one task. However, there is little to encourage children to develop a passion for books in the activities they choose independently.
- Adults have built trusting relationships with children and their families. They have established a nurturing atmosphere, in which children are well looked after. Staff complement this with clear routines and high expectations of the children's behaviour. As a result, children cooperate well with each other and their behaviour is good. They become confident learners and are well prepared for key stage 1.

School details

Unique reference number	107560
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10059012

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	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Livesey
Headteacher	Elizabeth Lloyd
Telephone number	01706 812 948
Website	www.st-josephs-tod.org.uk
Email address	head@st-josephs-tod.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 October 2016

Information about this school

- St Joseph's RC Primary School, Todmorden, is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school has a nursery with full-time places for children from the age of three.
- The school is designated as having a Roman Catholic character and is a part of the Diocese of Salford. The last section 48 inspection took place in 2014.
- The school has received support from the Trinity Teaching School Alliance.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is almost double the national average.
- Approximately a fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is average and the proportion with an education, health and care plan is below average.

- Approximately three quarters of pupils are of White British heritage. Pupils also come from six other ethnic groups, including Asian or Asian British Pakistani and Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of subjects in all classes across the school. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work, listened to them read and spoke to them about their learning. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at playtimes and lunchtimes. They gathered pupils' views about the school through formal and informal discussions. They also considered the four responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, a group of governors, a group of staff and representatives of the diocese and the local authority. They also took account of the 17 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding documents and monitoring records of the quality of teaching and learning. Inspectors also evaluated information relating to pupils' outcomes, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors gathered the opinions of parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the views of 25 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the four free-text responses.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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