

# Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School

Cedar Road, Liverpool, Merseyside L9 9AF

## Inspection dates

3–4 May 2017

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	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' plans to improve the school are not detailed enough. They lack specific actions and clear outcomes.
- Leaders and governors are not using the funding for disadvantaged pupils as effectively as they could. They are not identifying the barriers to progress for these pupils well enough.
- Governors have not asked enough searching questions about the use of funding for disadvantaged pupils and the impact that this has had on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have been too generous in their assessment of teaching and learning in the school.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge is inaccurate. Consequently, teachers are not using assessment information effectively to inform the planning of learning tasks for pupils.
- There is too much variation in the quality of teaching across the school.
- The most able pupils are not challenged enough to reach the highest standards in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do not progress as well as they could in writing because their mistakes are not addressed effectively enough by teachers.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has quickly established a positive, child-centred culture at the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. This contributes significantly to pupils' good behaviour in school.
- The support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make good progress from their starting points.
- The school's arrangements for supporting pupils' mental and emotional health are excellent.
- The effective use of the physical education and sport funding ensures that pupils participate in a wide range of high-quality sports provision.
- Children in the early years make good progress. Teachers use clear assessments to identify the learning needs of the children in their care.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school by ensuring that:
  - there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching across all year groups and classes
  - assessments more accurately inform teachers' planning to address pupils' misconceptions and secure consistently strong progress for pupils in writing and mathematics
  - there is greater challenge for the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, so that they achieve the highest standards, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - improvement plans provide clear targets and outcomes so they can be clearly evaluated
  - checks on the quality of teaching are more accurate, and identify clear areas for teachers to improve their practice
  - the use of the pupil premium funding is more precisely targeted at meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance, by:
  - ensuring that governors ask searching questions about the impact that the funding for disadvantaged pupils has on their progress.

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

- Since amalgamating to create the new primary school in September 2014, there has been considerable change at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School. The upheaval of building work, changes to leadership and the enforced staffing changes of the last two years goes some way to explain the low progress rates experienced by pupils in 2016. Nonetheless, leaders have been too optimistic in their evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders' plans to improve the school lack the precise actions that will enable them to achieve their aims. Plans lack clear outcomes and leaders and governors are not effectively evaluating the impact of their actions.
- Similarly, leaders' plans for the use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils is not specific enough, particularly in mathematics. The lack of accountability among leaders for the use of this funding has given rise to a lack of focus about its use.
- Leaders' assessments of the quality of teaching and learning across the school are too generous. The school was not sufficiently prepared for the thoroughness of the new testing arrangements in 2016. The expectations of pupils' depth of understanding in reading and mathematics were not high enough. This resulted in pupils making slower progress from their respective starting points than others nationally in these subjects.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use their mathematical skills outside of their lessons or the school's annual industry week, where pupils design their own business. There are few occasions for them to use their mathematics skills to solve real problems across different curriculum subjects.
- Staff are provided with training to develop their skills but leaders do not measure the effect of these opportunities in terms of how they improve outcomes for pupils.
- The systems to assess pupils' progress are not accurate. Inspection evidence found that the progress pupils make in their work books does not match with teachers' assessments in writing and mathematics. Consequently, some work is not matched well enough to pupils' prior learning. This is especially true of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils, who are not challenged enough in their writing and in their mathematics work to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The headteacher has guided the school through a time of considerable turbulence. With the backing of his senior leaders, he has ensured that the culture of the school has remained a positive one. This is clear in the strong relationships that staff have with pupils and in the excellent care, guidance and support that is offered to vulnerable pupils and their families. This is recognised by parents who responded positively to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- The use of the school's funding to develop physical education and sports is effective. The employment of a specialist teacher ensures that targeted groups of pupils are engaged in quality sports beyond the school day. A range of extra-curricular sports activities are also available to pupils.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified accurately and as early as possible so that they can receive support from an early stage in their education. The school is using the additional funding for these pupils effectively.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum that engages their interests and allows them to practise their reading and writing in a range of contexts. Examples of this include pupils' work on owls in Year 2. This involved people bringing owls to the school as a stimulus for pupils' art work, fact finding, and poetry, which was then set to music and pictures.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a good awareness of British values and they actively debate issues in class. Pupils show respect for other cultures and faiths. They also study their local heritage as part of their curriculum, such as the Year 1 topic on The Beatles.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors do not hold leaders stringently to account for the use of funding to support disadvantaged pupils. There is not enough precision in the identification of pupils' needs or in the actions taken to support them to overcome their barriers to learning. Leaders do not provide targets that are specific enough for governors to evaluate the effectiveness of their actions. Leaders have recognised the need to improve their planning and have commissioned a review of their approach, but this has not yet taken place.
- Governors are aware of the financial issues that faced the present headteacher on his appointment and have plans in place to ensure that the school recovers from a deficit budget. These plans have been approved by the local authority.
- Governors have a good overview of the arrangements for managing the performance of staff, including that of the headteacher. They thoroughly review staff targets against clear evidence of performance to support their pay progression. They make best use of external support to ensure that the headteacher's performance is managed thoroughly.
- Governors are trained in the safer recruitment of staff and have been actively involved in the appointment of new staff. They are aware of the safeguarding processes within the school.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a very strong safeguarding culture which stems from its focus on nurturing and caring for the wider needs of pupils and their families. Safeguarding records are securely stored. Plans for pupils who are looked after by the local authority are constantly under review. Pupils' targets are clear and focused on their individual needs.
- Pupils debate issues during their philosophy work, which allows them to explore topics such as the effects of terrorism. The school provides them with a safe and secure way to express their thoughts and feelings. Pupils consider how to make sound choices in

order to keep themselves safe. They are also aware of the steps that they need to take to ensure that they are safe online.

- Staff are trained and updated regularly on safeguarding issues. They are vigilant and pupils feel comfortable in approaching staff with any concerns. All of the parents spoken to agree that they have no safeguarding concerns.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning within the school is not consistently good and there is too much variation between classes and year groups. This has not been tackled effectively because the checks that leaders make on the quality of teaching and learning do not provide clear enough feedback for teachers on how they can improve their performance.
- Teachers do not build well enough on pupils' prior learning because the assessment of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is not accurate. This results in tasks being mismatched to the ability of pupils. For example, inspectors found that in pupils' writing there were spelling mistakes, and mistakes in the construction and punctuation of sentences. These mistakes persist over time because they are not addressed by teachers. Leaders have not questioned the accuracy of assessment information well enough. In some year groups it is too generous, while in others it is too harsh.
- The work in pupils' books shows that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not routinely challenged to achieve the standards of which they are capable in writing and mathematics. Pupils tend to agree that work is comfortable rather than challenging. Leaders have also identified this as an area for improvement.
- Pupils have opportunities to practise their written work across the curriculum. Leaders have identified the need to extend this to providing pupils with greater opportunities to practise their mathematics skills in different subjects.
- Where learning is least effective in the school, it is typified by a lack of urgency and pupils are not motivated by teachers to become involved. Learning time is lost as pupils move from one task to another and the checking of pupils' understanding is not always accurate.
- In contrast, the most effective learning that pupils receive features probing questions and activities that capture their attention as well as the effective use of highly competent teaching assistants. However, leaders are not yet making best use of the large pockets of highly effective practice in the school to iron out the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.
- The current progress in pupils' books suggests that progress has improved since 2016. This is a result of a focus on problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics, as well as a focus on the deeper understanding of texts in reading. In the sample of books seen, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that of other pupils with similar starting points. However, the work that pupils undertake shows little evidence of tasks that challenge them beyond the expectations of their age group.

- Pupils act on the feedback given by teachers in their books and they are given opportunities to improve their work, such as redrafting a piece of written work. They consolidate their learning through homework that reinforces the work done in lessons.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have individual plans that focus upon their needs. Those in receipt of additional funding receive individual support which enables them to access a curriculum that is tailored to their needs.
- In their reading, pupils secure fundamental phonic skills by the end of key stage 1 and progress to read with greater fluency, expression and understanding as they move through key stage 2. However, reading books do not always challenge pupils as they are not well matched to their different abilities.
- Children looked after are provided with effective, individualised support to cater for their emotional well-being and mental health.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- There are few recorded incidents of bullying. Pupils agree that decisive action to address concerns means that hurtful behaviour is addressed immediately. They have complete confidence and trust in school staff.
- Leaders identify vulnerable pupils and provide effective support so that they feel supported and safe. This support builds pupils' self-esteem and confidence, which has a very positive impact on their emotional well-being. The school's provision also includes the employment of a specialist child counsellor to help pupils overcome their confidence issues. Leaders are rightly proud of the nurture and support that they provide for pupils. This is also recognised by parents, who are grateful for the difference that this has made to their children.
- Pupils and staff agree that derogatory language is not used in school. Pupils appreciate each other's differences and have a good awareness of equalities. They have experience of discussing topics such as alternative families and are respectful of each other's views.
- The school provides wrap-around care, a breakfast club and holiday club to promote pupils' attendance at school and to provide consistency for parents in their care arrangements. Inspectors visiting the wrap-around care and breakfast club found this provision to be of a good quality.
- Although very strong, pupils' personal development and welfare is not yet outstanding because pupils are very reliant upon members of staff rather than managing their own feelings and emotions.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud to be part of their school. They are friendly and welcoming.

- Pupils' attitudes are generally positive towards their learning, although this is not always apparent in lessons where pupils switch off due to a lack of engagement or challenge. However, pupils say that the behaviour of others never disrupts the learning in class.
- Pupils agree that there is little bullying in the school. They trust the staff at the school to deal with this. This is a responsibility that is taken very seriously by leaders, who continually monitor pupils' behaviour. They act swiftly and decisively to ensure that behaviour in the school is never less than good.
- The school's most recent attendance figures show that persistent absence for targeted groups of pupils is not presently improving. However, this is not because of a lack of trying. The school has implemented a wide range of strategies to engage with pupils and families, many of whom are new to the school. The apathy from a small minority of parents is not used as an excuse by leaders. Leaders' tenacity and belief in their ability to bring about change is commendable.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Actions have been taken to address pupils' lack of depth of understanding in reading and mathematics experienced in 2016. There has been additional leadership support for Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils in these years are now making better progress. However, the school's own assessment information shows that the progress of pupils currently in the school still differs considerably in reading, writing and mathematics. There are pockets of strong progress in some classes and some year groups but this is not consistent across the school. Senior leaders are aware that the school is improving but that there is still some way to go to resolve this variability.
- In 2016, by the end of key stage 2, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, made slower progress from their respective starting points than others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics was much lower than the national average. Leaders are aware that this is not an effective use of the pupil premium and they have commissioned a review of the funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- In 2016, few pupils achieved the highest standards in their assessments at end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points due to the individualised support that they receive.
- Outcomes for children looked after show that they are settled and supported in a very enabling and nurturing environment. They are happy and feel secure in school.
- The proportion of pupils passing the phonics screening check in 2016 rose to well above the national average. Pupils grow in confidence with their reading to become fluent and expressive readers by Year 6.
- Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain because of the strong Christian values that underpin their understanding of what it means to be a good citizen. Pupils are guided to reflect on their own feelings and they are very respectful of the opinions and beliefs of others. The pastoral support provided by the school for the most vulnerable



pupils means that they gain confidence, self-esteem and an understanding of their own strengths as individuals.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- In a time of change across the school, the early years has benefited from continuity and strong leadership. Leaders have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses, which provides a clear focus for improvement in the early years.
- Children enter the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age and make good progress. This is seen in the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development, which is just above the national average.
- The assessment of children's skills is frequent and comprehensive. This enables teachers to match activities to develop children's next steps in their learning. There is a range of interesting and engaging tasks and a spacious well-resourced outdoor area. Where learning is most effective, children are allowed to explore and use their natural curiosity. Adult interactions support this through perceptive prompts and the modelling of effective language. This ensures that children speak politely to each other and work well together.
- Children have opportunities to develop their writing skills in a range of contexts. Inspectors found a small group of children independently writing sentences using language that was very advanced for their age. Adults reinforce the language of number well in the classroom; however, there is a lack of opportunities for children to practise their number skills in the outdoor area.
- Leaders have ensured that children have opportunities to develop their physical skills by developing the use of play equipment. This ensures that all children enjoy being physically active.
- The school's partnership arrangements to support children and their families starts in the early years, which is why parents are resoundingly positive about the school. A great deal of work goes on to make sure that, where there is a need, children and families receive help as soon as possible. This engagement with parents is a strength of the school.
- Staff work well with children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their calm manner ensures that these children are fully integrated into all activities and that they work well with their peers.
- Safeguarding in the early years is a strength. Children are secure and their engagement in their learning shows that they feel safe. Relationships between staff and children are excellent because all staff clearly care and have a very child-centred approach. All statutory requirements for the welfare of children in the early years are met.



## School details

Unique reference number	141076
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10022810

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	860
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joan Mulvoy
Headteacher	Mr Christopher Davey
Telephone number	0151 5259600
Website	<a href="http://www.bsprimary.com">www.bsprimary.com</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@bsprimary.com">admin@bsprimary.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about key stage 2 examination and assessment results on its website.
- This is the school's first inspection since it opened in September 2014.
- The headteacher provides support to other schools as a local leader of education.
- In 2016, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6
- The school is a much larger than averaged-sized primary school.
- The school provides a breakfast club, wrap-around care and a holiday club.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is just above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who are supported by the school is above the national average. Those who have an education, health and care plan or statement of special educational needs is well below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class, which included joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors examined a range of pupils' work in mathematics, writing and from across the curriculum.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, both individually and during class activities.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 91 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors made observations of pupils' behaviour during lessons, at playtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Meetings were held with five governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development.
- Inspectors looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation and considered how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Moiria Atkins	Ofsted Inspector
David Fann	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Quinn	Her Majesty's Inspector

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