

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley

Holcombe Drive, Burnley, Lancashire BB10 4BH

Inspection dates

9–10 July 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards in reading and mathematics are improving. Weaknesses in teaching writing mean that standards in this subject have declined.
- Leaders have improved teaching but historic weak practice from previous years leaves gaps in pupils' learning. These are not being tackled swiftly enough to ensure that pupils catch up and reach expected standards at the end of Year 6.
- Leaders and governors make increasingly effective use of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils. The progress of these pupils is improving in reading and mathematics but too few disadvantaged pupils reach the highest standards in any subject.
- Leaders do not ensure that children in the early years make enough progress. The outdoor area presents too few opportunities for progress across a range of early learning goals.
- In the early years and key stage 1, books and reading materials are not always matched to children's levels of experience and understanding and this limits their progress towards fluency in reading.
- Leaders and governors have not established a curriculum that supports pupils in making good progress across subjects in the wider curriculum, particularly in science, history, geography and Spanish.
- Leaders and governors do not ensure that pupils are aware of differences in sexual orientation. Consequently, pupils' understanding of these is limited.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders care for vulnerable pupils and their families very well and maintain strong working relationships with outside support agencies.
- Attendance has improved, including that of disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Most are keen to learn and disruption in lessons is rare.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from their starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring that there is consistently good teaching in all year groups
 - making sure that teachers swiftly identify any gaps in pupils' learning and intervene rapidly to prevent pupils from falling even further behind
 - ensuring that teachers always have high expectations of the amount and quality of pupils' written work so that standards in writing improve rapidly
 - raising teachers' expectations of the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils so that a greater proportion reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve progress in reading in the early years and key stage 1 by making sure that the books teachers choose for children to read or listen to are suitable for their experience and level of understanding.
- Strengthen leadership and governance by making sure that:
 - leaders develop the curriculum so that pupils make good progress across the full range of subject areas
 - leaders and governors ensure that pupils develop a wider awareness and understanding of differences in sexual orientation.
- Improve early years leadership and provision by:
 - ensuring that leaders and teachers make good use of information from observations and assessments to plan learning experiences that match children's needs and levels of experience
 - ensuring that teachers make good use of the outdoor area to promote children's learning across the full range of early learning goals
 - giving parents and carers more information on how they can continue to support their children's learning at home.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and governors are determined to improve standards and pupils' progress as they move through the school. Since the last inspection, the teaching of reading has improved and teachers now challenge pupils more in mathematics lessons.
- The school's summary self-evaluation does not provide a strong enough starting point for securing better outcomes for pupils. Self-evaluation does not give a clear enough view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, leading to a sharp focus on improving specific aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders provide effective support for pupils with SEND, supporting class teachers and overseeing the range of interventions in place. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders ensure that there is adequate coverage of the full range of national curriculum subjects across the school. However, they have yet to devise a curriculum that enables teachers to plan lessons that systematically build on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. This is why progress in subjects such as science, history, geography and Spanish is uneven and not good enough overall.
- Middle leaders have received training from the local authority. This is helping them to develop subject leadership and to design a new approach to curriculum planning for the next academic year. They are keen to extend their roles and take on more areas of responsibility but it is too soon to see any measurable impact of their work on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Following a review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding, leaders and governors make better use of the additional funding to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. An increasing proportion of these pupils reach expected standards in reading and mathematics. However, too few disadvantaged pupils reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- By contrast, the school sport premium is used well to increase participation in physical education (PE) and sport and the range of activities that the school offers. Pupils enjoy PE and sport and look forward to sessions led by a variety of sports coaches to help them develop their skills.
- The curriculum is enhanced through educational visits to local places of interest, including to the science museum. Pupils also make an annual residential visit to an outdoor education centre. They recently enjoyed taking part in a local history project where they produced tourist information brochures. Currently, there is a limited range of clubs and activities, apart from sports. There are plans in place to improve this next term, including starting a school choir to take part in festivals and celebrations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted. Pupils have a good understanding of people with different faiths and from different backgrounds.
- Pupils understand the values they need to become responsible citizens in modern Britain. They enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities in the school. For example,

elected members of the pupils' chaplaincy team are involved in appointing staff and take part in decisions on which charities to support.

Governance of the school

- Following a review of governance as recommended in the last inspection report, governors have undertaken a range of training and development with the support of the local authority. They are now well placed to challenge school leaders and hold them to account for pupils' progress and attendance, including those of disadvantaged pupils. They are aware that there is still work to be done to ensure that disadvantaged pupils catch up in their learning, especially those who are most able.
- Governors are closely involved in the life of the school and its community. They have responded positively to recent financial challenges, including managing some turbulence in staffing. They work effectively with the diocese to ensure that the school continues to be well maintained and to provide a safe, clean and calm environment for pupils.
- Governors are aware of their duty to promote equality of opportunity. They ensure that lessons in personal and social development complement the vision and values of the school. However, they have yet to ensure that pupils have a secure understanding of, and respect for, differences in sexual orientation.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All systems for safeguarding are fit for purpose and the vetting checks on staff are complete. Staff receive regular information on the most up-to-date safeguarding practice.
- The designated safeguarding leads work together to ensure that concerns and issues are dealt with well and that pupils are kept as safe as possible.
- Pupils said that they feel safe at school and that they learn about how to keep healthy and stay safe. Adults know pupils and their families well and records show that timely action is taken when there are concerns about a pupil's safety or welfare. Leaders work proactively to provide the help and support that vulnerable pupils and their families need, giving generously of their time and resources.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable and, as a result, pupils do not make consistently strong progress across a range of subjects.
- Pupils have frequent opportunities for writing, particularly in English and religious education lessons. However, leaders do not ensure that teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' written work. Too frequently, older pupils make careless mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Some pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, still do not routinely use capital letters and full stops and their handwriting is poor.

- The teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 is strong and the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in Year 1 is slightly above average. However, this does not translate into equally strong outcomes in reading by the end of Year 2. Lower-ability pupils do not all develop fluency in reading. While they can sound out words, pupils sometimes do not understand what these words mean because the books are too difficult for their age and experience.
- As pupils move through key stage 2, their fluency in reading and their comprehension skills improve. This is owing to daily effective guided-reading sessions. Pupils' reading for pleasure is less well developed as they do not always have sufficient adult guidance on choosing books that will appeal to their interests.
- Pupils across the full range of ability say that they really like being challenged more in mathematics lessons. Tasks are carefully planned to be progressively more difficult. Pupils know that 'chilli' numbers indicate increased 'heat'. This makes them think hard and apply their learning to more complex problems. It works well when pupils have a secure grasp of mathematical calculations skills. However, in those classes where pupils have experienced weak teaching in the past, there are too many gaps in their learning and their grasp of basic calculations, including multiplication tables. For example, pupils in Year 5 moved from calculating areas of rectangles to making comparisons between two different areas. Some pupils struggled with simple subtractions and the answers they gave were incorrect.
- Teaching in some subject areas, including history, geography, science and Spanish, is weak. Activities are chosen to fit in with overarching themes rather than to build on pupils' prior learning and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in each subject area. Work is frequently pitched at too low a level and does not extend pupils' thinking. In history, for example, pupils complete work on different topics, including the Romans, the Vikings and the Victorians, but do not gain a sense of chronology or an awareness of how different eras and civilisations influence British society today. In science, pupils label printed diagrams, for example of the valves and chambers of the human heart, but have little experience of practical scientific investigations, designing tests or recording results.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know that adults care for them and are always willing to listen to any concerns. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and want to do their best.
- Pupils' mental and physical welfare has a high priority in the school. The school's motto is 'Love one another' and this particularly shines through in the level of care given to vulnerable pupils and their families. Nurturing arrangements are strong and the school maintains strong links with outside support agencies. Those pupils who find it difficult to learn because of difficult circumstances at home are given time to talk about their feelings so that they will be in the very best frame of mind.

- Importantly, pupils learn how to stay safe. For example, they learn to ride bicycles safely and to keep themselves safe on the internet. They also learn that drug and alcohol abuse is very dangerous.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils, is improving and is now broadly average. Leaders communicate their expectations for pupils' attendance well, giving parents weekly updates on attendance and constantly reinforcing the need for pupils to come to school regularly and on time.
- Most pupils typically behave well and lessons are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions. They are polite and courteous and give a friendly welcome to visitors to the school.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying in the school and know that it is wrong to hurt one another either physically or through name-calling. A very few parents are concerned about bullying. Inspection evidence shows that leaders make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated and reported incidents are taken very seriously indeed.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' progress from their starting points is not consistently good. Standards at the end of all three key stages are below average.
- Although standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have shown improvement since the last inspection, recent test outcomes indicate that around half of the pupils in Year 6 have not achieved the expected standard in the three subjects combined. This means that these pupils are not well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Progress across key stage 2 has improved in reading and mathematics but has declined in writing. While pupils produce a great deal of written work, teachers' expectations of its quality are not high enough to improve standards, including across a range of different subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils are beginning to catch up with other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics. However, these pupils do not make enough progress to catch up in writing and too few of them reach the higher standards in any subject.
- Outcomes for pupils at the end of Year 2 are lower than in previous years. This is largely due to a significant number of pupils joining the school at times other than the usual times and to the proportion of pupils made vulnerable by exceptional home circumstances. Work in books shows that most pupils have made at least expected progress in writing and mathematics. However, too few lower-ability pupils become fluent readers.
- Pupils with SEND receive well-focused support for their needs. Their progress towards national benchmarks from their individual starting points is strong. Teaching assistants are well trained and work effectively to support individuals or small groups of pupils.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children generally enter the Nursery with low starting points. An increasing proportion of children have particularly weak language and communication skills. This explains in part why standards at the end of Reception have declined over time. There are also weaknesses in the quality of provision in the early years that mean children do not make as much progress as they should.
- Children and their families receive a warm welcome in the early years. Children soon settle in to the school routines, developing independence and confidence as they learn and play together.
- Children generally behave well. They listen to adults and follow instructions, for example in relation to hygiene routines before handling food. They learn to take turns and be kind to one another.
- Teachers are approachable, friendly and happy to talk to parents about any concerns at the beginning and end of the school day. Children take books home to share but not all parents have enough information about how they can work in partnership with the school to support their children's learning at home.
- Progress in the early years is not consistently good across all the areas of learning. Leaders rightly identify that children need to develop their physical skills in the outdoor area. Children really enjoy running about, climbing and playing on the bicycles and ride-on toys. This also contributes to their personal and social development. However, leaders do not always encourage children to make good use of the activities set up outdoors for other areas of learning, including mark-making, early writing, number work, art and design. This limits children's progress.
- Children start to learn phonics from their earliest days in the school. Teachers are skilled in building systematically on the letters and sounds children can recognise. However, their development of early reading skills is sometimes hampered because books and stories are beyond their experience and understanding. For example, they listened to a story about Peppa Pig going to a funfair. However, most of the children had never been to a funfair and did not fully understand the story.
- Leaders in the early years have not fully tackled weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers are skilled in using questioning to help children extend their thinking. However, they do not always use information from observation and assessment well to move children on in their learning. Where they identify gaps in learning, they do not always direct children to purposeful activities that will help them to catch up.
- Children are safe in the early years because leaders ensure that all the requirements for their welfare are met and carefully follow robust procedures for safeguarding.

School details

Unique reference number	119703
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10087851

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Hutchison
Headteacher	Ian Jones
Telephone number	01282 427 546
Website	www.st-marys-burnley.lancs.sch.uk/
Email address	head@st-marys-burnley.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January–1 February 2017

Information about this school

- St Mary's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who receive SEND support is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- Pupil numbers have declined over time and this has led to some turbulence in staffing and to financial constraints. Currently, there is stability in the staffing arrangements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups.
- Inspectors met with pupils and heard a selection of pupils read.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and leaders with subject responsibilities.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector met with two representatives of the local authority.
- A range of pupils' books from all year groups and subjects were scrutinised.
- Several documents were considered, including a summary of the school's self-evaluation, minutes of meetings of the governing body, external reviews by the local authority and the termly school improvement plans.
- Inspectors also considered information about pupils' progress, the use of additional funding, behaviour, attendance and safety.
- There were too few responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, to take into account. An inspector spoke to parents before school.
- Inspectors considered the comments made in four free-text responses from parents.
- Inspectors reviewed the 16 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and the 42 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jan Corlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Claire Hollister

Ofsted Inspector

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