

Holy Family RC Primary School

Lime Green Road, Limehurst Village, Oldham, Lancashire OL8 3NG

Inspection dates

23–24 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet consistently good across the school and this has led to pupils making inconsistent progress.
- Middle leaders are not yet effective in securing improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Current pupils in key stage 2 are making stronger progress. However, there is still a legacy of underachievement.
- Pupils' attendance is low compared to the national average. Too many pupils are persistently absent from school.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is variable and children's learning opportunities are not always maximised.
- Pupils do not make strong enough progress in a wide range of subjects. This is because of gaps in the curriculum.
- There is a disproportionate workload falling on a small number of governors. This means that they are not able to support and challenge leaders as effectively as they should.
- The strategy for using pupil premium funding has not been clear. Although improved for 2016/17 provision is not informed by an analysis of individual pupils' needs.
- In some classes, teachers do not assess pupils' work accurately. Work is not always set at the correct level, especially for the most able pupils.

The school has the following strengths:

- There is an increasingly strong focus on the safety and care of pupils. Leaders place a high priority on safeguarding.
- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have a sense of urgency around school improvement. They have quickly implemented actions that have improved teaching and are raising standards.
- There is a supportive and nurturing culture at the school. The social and emotional needs of pupils are very well met.
- Parents, carers and staff are very positive about the changes the headteacher has introduced. They feel that communication from school has improved greatly.
- Pupils are friendly, behave responsibly and cooperate well together. Their moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attendance and reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils, especially the most able, make accelerated progress by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is consistently good or better
 - assessment systems are embedded so that tasks for all pupils are more closely matched to their abilities and provide appropriate challenge
 - pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding more rapidly in subjects other than English and mathematics
 - teaching assistants are more actively involved, so that they have a greater impact on pupils' learning.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that:
 - the school's assessment systems are refined so that leaders and governors can measure the impact of actions more easily
 - action plans provide clearer guidance around the key priorities for improvement
 - the pupil premium strategy has a greater impact on improving the progress for disadvantaged pupils in all classes
 - all governors have a clearer understanding of the school's improvement priorities
 - the role of middle leaders is further developed so they make an effective contribution to ongoing school improvement.
- Improve the effectiveness of the early years by:
 - providing more planned and spontaneous opportunities for pupils to develop their early writing skills
 - improving the attainment and progress of boys across all areas of learning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

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

- The quality of education has declined since the previous inspection. Considerable turbulence in staffing is a major reason that current pupils have a legacy of underachievement. Over time, the quality of teaching has been too weak to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Consequently, too few pupils are well equipped for their transition into the next stage of their education.
- The new headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are ambitious for pupils, staff and the school. They have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate, honest and fair. The evaluation takes account of recent improvements in teaching, while also acknowledging that standards are not high enough in a minority of classes where teaching is not consistently good. School action plans are often lengthy and the key priorities for improvement are not easily recognised.
- Arrangements for checking on the quality of teaching are focused sharply on pupils' learning and progress. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide coaching and mentoring for staff. They provide detailed feedback to teachers following observations of learning and the checking of progress in pupils' books. This makes clear how teachers need to improve their teaching and pupils' learning.
- The subject leaders for mathematics and English are taking appropriate action to bring about improvements in teaching. For example, training for staff has improved their understanding of how to teach mathematical reasoning skills. The teaching of reading has been revised and provides a more structured framework for a consistent, whole-school approach. However, it is too early to determine the impact of these initiatives on pupils' outcomes.
- Senior leaders have quite rightly identified that middle leadership requires further development. Many subject and middle leaders are still new to their roles and their skills are still developing. They do not currently use any assessment of pupils' learning to improve the quality of teaching across the curriculum.
- Because leaders have placed great emphasis on the development of basic skills, some gaps in the curriculum are evident. For example, the school has only very recently begun to introduce more focused learning in history and geography. The school is aware of these shortcomings and has an action plan to bring about the necessary improvements.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well. Pupils said how much they enjoy sport and find lessons fun. They like and benefit from the regular visits from sports coaches. These visits also benefit teachers because they help to develop their skills in teaching sport. Pupils recognise the value of physical activity as a part of being healthy. Teachers also benefit from the training they receive.
- Leaders' systems to check the attainment and progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils are at an early stage of development. The new systems and procedures for assessment are therefore not precise and clear enough. Consequently, where pupils may

be struggling to keep up, interventions and support are not always quickly implemented to tackle any issues as soon as they arise.

- The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. The leader has designated time to assist with early identification of pupils who have special needs. The monitoring of practice in this area has been strengthened to ensure that it is of a good quality.
- The headteacher has arranged good-quality partnerships with other schools that are enabling staff to learn from one another. For example, regular meetings are held with staff of other schools to compare pupils' work and to check that assessment judgements made by teachers are accurate and reliable. The headteacher and the governing body are very appreciative of the effective support of the local authority. This has supported the impact new leaders have made since they joined the school.
- The curriculum places appropriate emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils who belong to the school council share their views with the school leadership team regularly. They have overseen improvements to the school rewards systems and to playground resources. Pupils also use a 'feelings box' to share how they are feeling with the staff. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to do this. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain, and their knowledge of British values is developing well. For example, they learn about democracy and know they need to be 'responsible, sensible and reliable' before being elected to various roles of responsibility in school.

Governance of the school

- Governors share leaders' high aspirations for all groups of pupils in the school.
- The chair of the governing body and other governors are fully committed to the school. However, due to vacancies they are shouldering a disproportionate workload. This means that it is a challenge to cover the full range of governor responsibilities. Governors are in the process of recruiting new governors who can offer specific skills.
- The governors in post check the school's work rigorously. They ask challenging questions and challenge leaders about the school's performance and any dips in pupils' achievement. For instance, governors work with pupils to assess their understanding of the curriculum, such as pupils' mathematical fluency. They are also involved in ensuring that health and safety procedures are being followed. Due to the wealth of information in reports from the headteacher, governors feel they currently have a developing understanding of pupil assessment in the school and the key priorities for improvement.
- Although governors have information on how the school spends the sports funding, governors do not have a clear view of how leaders use additional funding for pupils with pupil premium. They do not measure closely enough what difference this funding is making to disadvantaged pupils' progress nor do they measure attainment against national data.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a culture of safety around the school. Leaders have strengthened systems to

make the site safe and secure. Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to keep safe, including when they use the internet. Parents spoken to agree that pupils are safe in school.

- Staff and governors are trained appropriately to carry out their respective roles in keeping children safe. The safeguarding team is vigilant in monitoring pupils for signs of risk.
- Frequent updates and checks take place on staff members' understanding of current safeguarding guidance. These ensure that staff are confident about knowing how to spot signs of danger and how to report any concerns about pupils.
- Policies, procedures and records are up to date and fit for purpose. These include risk assessments and accident logs.
- Detailed records show that families who need additional support are referred to other agencies, when needed. Referrals are followed up and monitored stringently. There is clear evidence of challenge to other agencies where they are slow to act.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is variable across the school. Not enough teaching is consistently good or better. Some teachers model mathematical language in explanations to pupils which enables the pupils to successfully use these terms themselves while problem solving. However, other teachers were unable to successfully ensure that pupils grasped new concepts. As a result, not all groups of pupils make good progress in all year groups.
- Over time, teaching, particularly in key stage 2, has not been strong enough to help pupils make the most of their time at Holy Family. Historically weak teaching has resulted in older pupils leaving with gaps in their learning. Teaching since the previous inspection has not fully prepared pupils for the next stage of their education.
- Some additional adults in the classrooms do not support pupils' learning as well as they could. They do not ask questions which help to move pupils' learning forwards. In addition, they do not have a firm enough understanding of what pupils need to do to move on in their learning.
- High staff morale and greater stability within the workforce demonstrate that leaders' work to improve teaching is now having an impact. Work in pupils' books and the information that leaders hold on pupils' achievement show an improving picture in most classes across the school.
- At times, teachers do not make good use of the information they have about what pupils already know and can do. Consequently, the challenge on offer to pupils is not consistently at the right level. This is most noticeable for the most able pupils. Teachers do not expect enough from this group of pupils. These pupils are often not provided with well-matched activities that challenge them sufficiently to make the rapid progress of which they are capable. The support that leaders have put in place to develop teachers' confidence in supporting these pupils in mathematics is in the early stages and, as a result, this is not secure.
- The quality of pupils' work across the full range of subjects is not consistently of a good standard. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for the pupils to gain the

necessary skills and understanding in subjects such as history, geography and science.

- In key stage 1, the teaching of phonics is inconsistent. Where it is less effective, activities do not build on pupils' prior knowledge. In these cases, assessment is not used well enough to adapt work to meet pupils' needs.
- The teaching of writing does not consistently ensure that pupils make enough progress, as teachers do not take enough notice of what pupils are unable to do. Teaching to develop pupils' use of grammar and their confidence in sentence structure is not yet secure.
- The teaching of reading is becoming increasingly effective. Leaders have identified that pupils do not have a strong enough understanding of a wide range of vocabulary and do not read widely or often enough. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that recently adapted reading methods and new resources are already having a positive impact on reading standards and pupils' positive attitudes to reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Older pupils willingly take on roles of responsibility such as school councillors, fruit monitors and peer mentors. Monitors take their roles seriously. They talk to younger pupils and help pupils who may be feeling out of sorts in the playground.
- Older pupils are developing more focused work habits. However, in other classes, often when teaching is less engaging, learning is impeded by off-task behaviours or slow responses to teachers' requests.
- Pupils feel safe and are valued as members of the school community. They know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. The school's curriculum has a wide range of visits and visitors to give pupils a good understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that the school is a safe place to learn.
- Pupils' physical and emotional well-being is central to the ethos of the school. Staff are aware of the issues many pupils face and have robust systems in place to help them. Pupils are looked after and cared for very well.
- The school has a daily breakfast club which is well attended, much appreciated by parents and enjoyed by the pupils who use it.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and they act with respect for the safety of others. They are courteous and polite. They are well versed in how to keep themselves safe on the internet and when using electronic devices.
- The management of behaviour is consistent throughout the school. No poor behaviour was observed during the inspection. However, pupils' concentration sometimes wanes

when time is not used well. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils. They do not consistently show good attitudes to learning when they are not being challenged appropriately, especially towards the end of lessons.

- In some classes, routines to ensure that pupils can move on to the next stage of their learning are not fully secure. This means that, occasionally, when pupils finish a section of work, they waste time waiting to be directed by the teacher rather than knowing what they should move on to.
- Many pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They work well with others and listen respectfully to adults. Pupils often work hard and try their best. This is evident in the improving pride they take in their work and books, but this is not yet consistent across the school.
- Pupils are aware of the different types of bullying. Pupils are very confident that the headteacher and other staff will deal with any incidents of bullying straight away. They told inspectors that incidents of bullying have reduced but still do occur occasionally.
- The school has robust actions for dealing with poor punctuality and absence but these are yet to show any impact. Pupils' attendance remains below the national average. The number of persistent absentees also remains above the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, too many pupils have not made the progress of which they were capable. Standards are now improving, particularly in the early years and key stage 1. However, there is a legacy of underachievement caused by weak teaching and leadership in the past. This legacy still lingers and means that older pupils are still catching up.
- The standards attained by pupils in Year 6 in recent years were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in these subjects has also been much lower than average. With improved teaching, standards in key stage 2 are rising. Work in pupils' books is mostly at the level expected for their age. This represents stronger progress from current pupils' starting points.
- In 2016, pupils at the end of key stage 1 achieved standards which were below average in reading and writing but matched the national average in mathematics. However, in 2017, the standards reached by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics broadly matched the national average in all three subjects. This is the result of improved teaching, which is allowing current pupils to make stronger progress. Work in pupils' books reflects this improving picture.
- Leaders recognise that the lower standards in key stage 1 in reading in 2016 were the result of weaker teaching in phonics. Not enough pupils pass the phonics check in Year 1. The approach to the teaching of phonics has been revised and current pupils are starting to make stronger progress.
- The most able pupils are not achieving as well as they should. The proportion of pupils in key stage 2 who reached the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 was well below the national average. Work in pupils' books indicates that these pupils are not challenged to make the progress of which they are capable. Some disadvantaged pupils are now supported well with bespoke support and additional teaching, but not all. They sometimes reach higher standards than the non-

disadvantaged pupils in school. However, disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading and mathematics was significantly below the national average for disadvantaged pupils in 2015 and 2016.

- Pupils do not make strong progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that they do not have a firm understanding of the topics covered. Not enough attention is paid to the development of subject-specific skills in subjects such as history, geography and science.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The new early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and of children's outcomes. The determination to focus firmly on children's learning and progress can be seen in the recent improvements in children's outcomes.
- Relationships are strong in the early years. Children behave well in both Nursery and Reception. They demonstrate good levels of cooperation, take turns and share. The children are happy in the setting.
- The curriculum has recently been developed to focus provision and teaching on providing learning opportunities to entice and engage children. This approach is not yet applied consistently and many activities do not always promote or extend children's learning, particularly for boys. The outcomes for boys continue to be a concern as their outcomes are below those of girls in school and of other boys nationally. In addition, planned activities do not promote children's writing skills well enough.
- Outside activities do not yet fully support early reading, writing and number skills. For example, there are limited opportunities for children to work together on tasks that promote discussion. Indoors, leaders have not made sure that when children choose for themselves, adults ask children questions that deepen their learning.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has been below the national average for the last three years. However, the proportion of children who achieve this good level of development is increasing year on year.
- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently good because some activities are not sufficiently engaging or are pitched at the wrong level of children's development.
- Children mix well and are kind to each other. They know that they should follow the rules and do as the adults tell them. At times, children cooperate well. For example, a group in Nursery worked together well to construct a cardboard house. They changed the build in response to each other's suggestions.
- Welfare systems are securely in place for first aid and medicine administration. Safeguarding is effective and all statutory welfare requirements are met. There are good partnerships with other professionals, for example the speech and language service, to ensure that all children's needs are met effectively.

School details

Unique reference number	105724
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10044834

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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Ryan
Headteacher	Alison Booth
Telephone number	0161 770 2400
Website	www.holyfamily.oldham.sch.uk/
Email address	info@holyfamily.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2012

Information about this school

- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is nearly twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The previous headteacher left her post in the summer term 2015. With the support of the diocese and local authority, the governors secured an associate headteacher from another local Catholic school. She was in post until the new headteacher started in September 2016 and continued to work with the school, one day a week, for the autumn term. The new headteacher has overseen many staff changes and after a period of turbulence, things have now settled.
- The school met the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2015 and 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. They observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also observed pupils at playtime and during lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at the provision for the children in the early years, including in outdoor areas.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the early years leader. Inspectors also met with the staff responsible for safeguarding, pastoral care and attendance and a group of middle leaders.
- Inspectors examined pupils' books during lessons and during a scrutiny of samples of written work across a range of pupils and subjects. The observations and work scrutiny were carried out jointly with the headteacher and/or the deputy headteacher.
- An inspector heard some pupils read and talked to them about reading.
- The inspectors reviewed documents, including school policies, safeguarding information, the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness, the school improvement plan, action plans, minutes of governing body meetings and information about pupils' progress and the impact of teaching.

Inspection team

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