

St John's Roman Catholic Primary School

Ann Street, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL11 1EZ

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough teaching is consistently good, therefore, too few pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress and standards are not rising quickly.
- Work is not planned sufficiently carefully to make sure that it is at the right level to ensure that pupils of all abilities achieve well.
- Pupils do not have enough regular chances to build-up their specific mathematical skills within learning in other subjects.
- Marking is inconsistent in the quality of information it gives pupils about what they know well and what they need to do next. Guidance given by teachers is not regularly responded to in pupils' later work.
- Leaders and teachers are not ensuring that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well through prompt and accurate identification and skilful and appropriate teaching and support.
- Senior and subject leaders do not have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for checking the quality of teaching and how well all groups of pupils are achieving. As a result, they do not have a fully accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses to ensure that improvements can be made as quickly as possible.
- The governing body, which regularly questions the school about its work, does not have a full picture of teaching and achievement throughout the school to be able to both support it and hold it fully to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Reception and Nursery classes achieve well.
- The pupils behave well throughout the day. They feel safe and valued in the school.
- Pupils mix very well in this inclusive and diverse school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted very well.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons, of which one was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors spoke with many pupils during learning and playing, attended a registration group and listened to several Year 2 pupils reading. They also watched pupils being supported in small groups.
- One inspector met formally with a group of pupils to find out what they think about their school. He spoke with several parents at the start and end of the school day to hear their views about the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including information about the standards and progress of the pupils, the school's improvement planning, samples of pupils' work, and policies to keep them safe.
- The inspectors took into account the 17 parental responses to the on-line questionnaire Parent View and the 104 responses that they submitted to the survey that the school has recently conducted. No staff questionnaires were received.

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

David Fann

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is average-sized, compared to other primary schools.
- Fifty-four per cent of the pupils at the school are of the Catholic faith. The school also welcomes pupils of other faiths.
- The large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well above average. (The pupil premium funding is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority).
- In some year groups an above average proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times different to those expected. However, mobility is declining.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, an extension has provided increased accommodation and facilities for learning.
- The deputy headteacher took-up her post in September 2013.
- The governing body has begun to work jointly with the governing body of St Gabriel's Roman Catholic Primary School in order to share training and good practice. A partnership with three other local primary schools has resulted in a greater range of sporting activities and competitive activities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils' progress quickens and standards rise to be at least average, by making sure that:
 - work for pupils of all abilities is always planned carefully so that it matches accurately their levels of ability
 - marking tells pupils exactly what they have learned well and specifically what they need to do next and teachers check that pupils have followed their advice
 - pupils have carefully considered and regular opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other lessons.
- Strengthen the provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and improve their rate of progress to at least good, by making sure that:
 - their needs are identified quickly and accurately
 - teachers and teaching assistants have the necessary training and skills to support the pupils' specific learning needs.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels by making sure that:
 - leaders have an accurate knowledge of the strengths in teaching and the areas for improvement
 - senior and subject leaders have clearly defined roles and responsibilities in checking and

assessing the quality of pupils' work and for making improvements

- the governing body has a secure knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement throughout the school, in order to be able to hold it fully to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of governance can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils make the progress expected of them in Key Stages 1 and 2, but not enough make good progress. This is because the quality of teaching is variable between subjects and year groups.
- Not enough pupils reach higher levels of attainment than those expected for their age. This is because the work provided for the most able pupils does not regularly demand enough of them. It does not make them think more deeply and widely about what they are learning or give them enough responsibility for their learning.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is variable. Those identified as needing support at school action make slower progress than those supported at school action plus, due to teaching and support that does not always best meet their needs.
- The school's data, backed-up by evidence from observations of learning in lessons and samples of pupils' work, show that overall standards are beginning to rise in some year groups. Standards in writing have risen the most, aided by the school's long-term focus on improving pupils' writing skills. However, standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain below average by the end of Year 6, where the school's new methods have not had time to have as much impact.
- There are no significant differences between the rates of progress of boys and girls. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are provided with targeted supported so that they develop quickly the skills needed, for example to read and write.
- Children join the Nursery with levels of skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for children of their age. They quickly make progress in all aspects of their learning and development and this continues throughout the Nursery and Reception classes because learning captures their imagination and enables them to discover, explore and find out for themselves. This year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is close to the national average, providing a good springboard for Key Stage 1 learning.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who reach the required standard in phonics (sounds that letters make) is above average for most groups of pupils. This is because from Nursery onwards, speaking, reading and writing are built-in to their learning and practised throughout the day.
- Pupils enjoy reading and get plenty of chances to do so. Progress in Year 2 is accelerating, with pupils showing greater skills in understanding stories and evaluating the characters in them.
- The pupil premium funding is used with care, to provide additional staff who help the pupils eligible for this support to improve their reading and writing skills. Extra equipment, and resources such as a homework club and breakfast club places, are also provided to support their attendance and social needs. In 2013, the gap in standards between those pupils eligible for free school meals and those not, was three terms in writing. There was no gap in reading and mathematics. This year, pupils who are helped by the additional funding are half a term ahead in writing and one term ahead in reading. There is no difference in mathematical standards between the groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that not enough pupils make good progress by the end of Year 6.
- The major variability is in the accuracy of the levels of work provided for pupils, especially for lower ability pupils and the most able pupils. Although pupils get different work, often it is either too hard or regularly too easy for pupils capable of reaching higher levels.
- Marking of work, although sometimes very good, is inconsistent in how helpful it is in telling pupils what exactly they know well and what they specifically need to do next. Teachers do not check regularly whether any advice they have given has been acted on in later work. However, marking is almost always regular and in some lessons, pupils receive very useful advice that

makes them think harder about what they are doing.

- When teaching is consistently good, pupils make good progress. This is especially so in the Early Years Foundation Stage where a myriad of activities and opportunities ensure that the children learn quickly and widely. Several children were entranced by the movements of a snail, leading to lots of questions and a quickly developing knowledge of snails' eating habits and where they live.
- There are examples of good teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2. In a numeracy lesson, pupils made good progress and showed good skills in understanding what the position of each number represents in a four digit number. Careful and interesting ways of explaining this helped pupils to master what they were learning.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils have lots of chances to practise their reading and writing skills in other lessons in a variety of subjects. They have some chances to try out what they have learned in numeracy lessons within learning in other subjects but these are less regular and not specifically planned.
- The teaching assistants facilitate the children's learning very effectively in the Nursery and Reception classes. There is also some good practice in other classes. Sometimes, however, support does not start at the beginning of the lesson in order to address any queries or misunderstandings immediately. Not all staff yet have all of the necessary skills to help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The staff and pupils get on well with each other and the pupils show respect for the staff. This sets the scene for pupils to learn happily and gives them the confidence to ask questions and volunteer responses.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is evident in lessons and around the school site.
- The pupils like their school and show it in their respect for their surroundings and each other. They wear their uniform smartly.
- The pupils work and play together harmoniously, reflecting the Catholic ethos of respect and care for others that runs through everything that the school does. Lunchtime, for example, is a happy, sociable occasion where the pupils, who come from a total of thirty-three countries, enjoy the company of their peers.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fundamental to the school's work. The pupils respond to this.
- This is an inclusive school, in which the pupils know that they are all valued equally. They are proud to develop their personal skills through having responsibilities such as play and sports leaders and buddies.
- Pupils are keen to learn and settle quickly in lessons. Even when some learning is not at the right level for them, most continue to try hard.
- A few pupils find it hard to manage their behaviour themselves but the staff ensure that other pupils' learning is not disrupted.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The pupils feel safe, helped by regular teaching about how to be safe and to stay safe. They have a good understanding for their age of a range of possible dangers, such as from using the internet and crossing the road. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have used the building of the new tram system to develop their awareness of staying safe.
- The pupils say that there is very little bullying but know what to do if it happens to them.
- Pupils' attendance is average over time. This year, it has increased to well above average, aided by the work of the inclusion manager who has reinforced the importance of good attendance, along with good ways of addressing lower attendance.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders at all levels do not have a fully accurate picture of the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards as quickly as possible. Some of their judgements are over-generous.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have not been identified promptly or always accurately. The quality of support they have is variable because staff, all of whom are very committed to helping pupils do well, do not all have the skills needed to help these pupils progress at a better rate.
- The headteacher is supported well by the senior team. Together they are improving systems to check the school's work. As a start, the new systems for checking pupils' progress, introduced by the senior leadership team, are beginning to provide the school with an accurate picture of pupils' achievement. Pupil progress meetings are resulting in more prompt support for pupils who are not achieving as they should.
- Subject leaders, several of whom are still developing their roles, are bringing in new ways to help pupils learn more quickly in reading, writing and mathematics. However, they do not have clear roles and responsibilities; consequently, not all observe teaching or check pupils' work on a regular basis to ensure a fully up-to-date picture of the school's performance. Impact is starting to come through but it is patchy and is work in progress.
- The school has made a good start to promoting good teaching through performance management targets of staff that are mainly measureable and appropriately challenging. Senior leaders observe teaching formally three times a year and are driving improvements by supporting staff whose teaching is less than good. The staff speak positively about the training available to them to help them to achieve their targets and also to strengthen their teaching and leadership skills.
- The new special needs coordinator has started to overhaul the provision. Presently, it is unclear whether some of the above average proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs have a learning need or are under-achieving as a result of weaknesses in teaching. Data is not broken-down into the different special needs groupings and not all staff have the training or all of the skills to provide the specific help needed for pupils to make good progress.
- Rightly, the school devotes much time to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. It also provides a range of learning activities through the theme of body, mind and spirit that promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and very broad learning across subjects. Not all pupils have an equal chance of success in their learning because for some groups work is sometimes too hard or too easy and slows down their rates of progress.
- Primary sports funding has been allocated carefully and is mainly being used to provide additional resources, such as a lease on a mini-bus, equipment, team kits and a greater range of clubs. Teachers have also had training in teaching specific skills. The impact so far has been mainly on the greater participation rates of pupils in a wide range of activities, including lacrosse, dodge ball and aqua splash.
- Most parents are supportive of all aspects of the school's work. They feel welcome in the school and appreciate the regular communication between home and school. They enjoy the opportunities to attend school events and workshops that help them to support their children's learning.
- The local authority supports the school in areas such as data. It has encouraged the governors to attend training so they can work out what national data is saying about the school's performance. Its support is on-going and beneficial to the school in helping it to improve as quickly as possible.
- The school is equally focused on pupils' safety and well-being as on their academic development. This is apparent in the care taken to ensure that its safeguarding procedures meet the statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are extremely committed and are determined to make the school as good as it can be. They have a secure understanding of how it needs to improve. They know that teaching and progress are variable and where teaching is strongest. The governors speak

confidently about the use and impact of pupil premium funding and performance management procedures. They are finding out more for themselves about the school, such as through discussions with school leaders, parents and through coming into school regularly. The aspect in which they are less secure is in the rates of progress of different groups of pupils throughout the school. This lack of knowledge prevents the governing body from challenging the school in all aspects of its work to ensure that it moves forward rapidly.

- The management of the school's finances is sound.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105826
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	444308

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	276
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Skilling
Headteacher	Jeremy Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2010
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