

The Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School

Farrington Lane, Ribbleton, Preston, Lancashire PR2 6LX

Inspection dates

12–13 December 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	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

- Leaders do not have sufficiently high expectations, and progress, particularly in reading and mathematics, requires improvement.
- The school lacks stability because there is not a permanent headteacher in post.
- Assessment information is not always used precisely enough by teachers in the classroom to meet pupils' needs. Consequently, some pupils' interest wanes.
- The curriculum, other than in English and mathematics, is not sufficiently broad and balanced. Some teachers are not as confident and knowledgeable to deliver some subjects as they should be.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. They do not take enough opportunities to extend and challenge pupils so that they develop the skill of working on their own. As a result, some pupils become easily distracted.
- Teachers do not ask sufficiently probing questions to encourage pupils to reason, think more deeply about their learning and articulate their understanding.
- The approach to teaching in early years classes is not consistent. Assessment information is not used precisely enough to meet children's learning needs. Low expectations of what children are capable of means that they are not as well prepared to start Year 1 as they could be.

The school has the following strengths

- The associate headteacher, other leaders and governors have taken swift action to tackle key improvement issues in the school.
- Staff are hardworking and dedicated and ensure that pupils are central to all that they do.
- The strong Catholic ethos and Christian values shine brightly in school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are polite and conduct themselves well when walking around school.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged or who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress.
- Strong relationships, the promotion of pupils' personal, social and emotional skills and good-quality pastoral care all ensure that pupils are well cared for.
- Parents think highly of the school and are confident that their children are safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching in order to improve behaviour in the classroom and raise the achievement of pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics, by ensuring that teachers:
 - raise their expectations regarding what pupils can achieve
 - provide opportunities to extend and challenge pupils
 - use assessment more precisely in lessons to match work to pupils' ability
 - develop pupils' confidence to work on their own
 - are confident to ask questions of pupils to encourage them to reason and think more deeply about what they are learning and articulate their understanding.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by making sure that:
 - a good-quality, permanent headteacher is appointed as soon as possible
 - leaders insist on high expectations of achievement for all pupils
 - the curriculum, other than in English and mathematics, is broad and balanced and teachers' knowledge and skills enable them to deliver all subjects confidently.
- In early years ensure that:
 - there is a consistency of approach across all classes
 - assessment information is used more precisely to meet children's learning needs and to challenge them sufficiently
 - there are suitably high expectations of what children are capable of and they are well prepared, ready to start Year 1.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The temporary associate headteacher, along with the newly appointed deputy headteacher and the wider leadership team, have made a swift and convincing start to addressing the improvement issues in the school. However, they acknowledge there is more to do, as too few pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- The associate headteacher has made a sterling contribution to the recent improvements in the school. However, she acknowledges that the school is missing the permanency of a leader.
- Leaders are honest in their views that the school is not as strong as it once was, but still have an over-generous view of the school. Self-evaluation does not capture the true picture of the school's weaknesses. However, the majority of priorities identified for improvement are accurate, and where action is taken there is a positive impact on teaching, learning and pupils' progress. For example, the action taken to stabilise the staffing in school has led to pupils' feeling more confident and secure in their learning.
- One of the associate headteacher's first actions was to replace the school's existing method of collecting assessment information with one that was more reliable and accurate. Leaders have quickly put the new system in place and are using it effectively to discuss pupils' progress and learning with teachers. It is also successfully used to plan opportunities to help pupils who are struggling and need to catch up, and monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils. The wider leadership team and teachers have enthusiastically embraced this new approach. However, teachers are not yet using this information precisely enough to pinpoint pupils' exact learning needs, or to identify where more challenge is needed. Consequently, some pupils are not making the further gains they could.
- This term, leaders have focused on improving assessment, stabilising staffing and developing aspects of English and mathematics. Leaders recognise that curriculum subjects other than English and mathematics are not as broad and balanced as they could be. They are accurate in their evaluation that this area needs further review, particularly exploring opportunities to develop staff's confidence and knowledge in some subjects. However, all subjects are taught.
- Teachers are confident in teaching personal, social and health education, emotional skills and religious education. Pupils also talk excitedly about how much they enjoy physical education and information and communication technology.
- The curriculum is enriched by providing real-life experiences to stimulate and excite pupils, such as school trips and visitors to the school. The school grounds are spacious and a source of great pride to pupils who talk enthusiastically about the games and sports they play at lunchtime. Reading, writing and mathematics are woven across the curriculum wherever possible.
- The use of pupil premium funding is appropriate. Funding is used in a variety of ways, particularly in supporting pupils' social and emotional well-being. It is also used to support engagement with families and to ensure that this group of pupils is given equal opportunities to access all that the school has to offer. It is being used increasingly

effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve well.

- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. They benefit from regular opportunities to meet with colleagues from other schools and participate in professional training. They share the learning from this to improve and develop the whole staff team. As a result, they make an important contribution to school improvement in their areas of responsibility.
- The leadership and organisation of provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is effective. Identification of their needs is thorough, and resources are of a good standard. Staff understand pupils' learning and welfare needs, and every effort is made to remove any barriers to learning. This ensures that pupils make good progress. They also succeed in their personal and social development.
- The school's Christian values and school motto 'Learning and loving with Jesus in our hearts' are embodied in everything that the school does. Leaders' promotion of equality and diversity has fostered pupils who are extremely caring, considerate, respectful and tolerant of each other and the wider community.
- Leaders are well respected by staff, parents and pupils. Staff are motivated to support continued improvement. In a period of instability for the school, staff have worked extremely hard and with dedication to ensure that pupils remain at the heart of the school. Relationships between staff are strong. The very large majority of staff are proud to work at The Blessed Sacrament.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well. Pupils said how much they enjoy sport and find lessons fun. In particular, they like and benefit from the regular visits from sports coaches. Pupils recognise the value of physical activity as a part of being healthy.
- The good promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means the school is a calm and considerate environment where pupils mix happily together. Pupils are actively involved in the school community, which contributes to developing and promoting the school values. Pupils were keen to explain that 'everyone is welcome', and 'we are like one big family'.
- Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils learn about the wider community, gaining some understanding of respecting people from different backgrounds and with different characteristics. They raise funds for charities and learn about respect and democracy. Pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain and increasingly understand its values.
- The school is well supported by the local authority and the diocese. This has been helpful to governors in sourcing temporary leadership. Leaders have also benefited from support in addressing priorities to improve aspects of teaching and learning and evaluating the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders and teachers play a full part within various networks of schools. They support each other in a range of areas, for example, working together to develop practice and checks with regard to assessment.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is effective.
- Governors took authoritative action when they were faced with the resignation of the previous headteacher. When realising the likelihood that they would not be able to appoint a replacement for the start of the new academic year, they were quick to ask for support from the local authority and the diocese. They have worked well with these professionals to secure high-quality temporary leadership for the school and to begin to address the issues regarding standards. However, they are aware that the school is lacking the dynamism and vision that comes from having a good-quality permanent leader in place. To this end, they are keen to appoint someone as soon as possible.
- Governors know the school well and are clear about its strengths and weaknesses. They ask good-quality, challenging questions about the progress of pupils and are making a valuable contribution to the current improvements in the school.
- The governing body has made sure that primary PE and sport funding and pupil premium funding are spent effectively and make a difference for pupils.
- The governing body has a good understanding of performance management procedures and supports the headteacher effectively in ensuring the management of teachers' pay.
- The governing body is diligent in carrying out its responsibilities to safeguard pupils. There is a governor responsible for overseeing and monitoring safeguarding and welfare-related matters. She carries out this role thoroughly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in school, as are the care and welfare of vulnerable pupils and families who benefit from good-quality additional support. There is a clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Effective safeguarding and child protection systems are in place and are understood by staff. Appropriate training for staff and governors is undertaken and up to date, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism and female genital mutilation.
- Staff are vigilant around the care and support of vulnerable pupils. The school's pastoral team has cultivated strong, supportive relationships with parents and other agencies, which are instrumental in contributing to the safeguarding of the vulnerable pupils in their care.
- Pupils spoken to were unanimous in their view that they feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe personally and online. Pupils feel very confident that adults will help them if necessary. The overwhelming majority of parents feel that the school keeps their children safe and well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent and has not been effective enough to enable pupils to make good progress throughout the whole school. As a result, by the end of key stage 1 and lower key stage 2, not enough reach the standards that are expected for their age.
- Expectations regarding what pupils can achieve are often too low. As a result, some pupils do not achieve all they are capable of and very few make more than expected progress for their age.
- Teachers do not always do enough to ensure that pupils are being sufficiently challenged, particularly, but not exclusively, the most able. Consequently, in some lessons pupils find work too easy. They either complete it quickly or without needing to give it much thought. As a result, pupils miss out on being stretched further or extended in their learning.
- Teachers' systems for assessing progress on a day-to-day basis or within a lesson are not precise enough to pick up who needs further challenge or, conversely, if the work is too difficult. As a result, teachers do not always provide work that meets pupils' needs.
- In some lessons, too many pupils are easily distracted. They start activities with good intentions, but their interest soon wanes. This is often because the work provided does not meet pupils' needs. However, it is also the result of the difficulties some pupils have in working independently when they are asked to apply their learning or try out some of the skills and knowledge they have.
- Teachers are well organised and use a range of resources. They work hard to ensure that activities are interesting and build on pupils' experiences. For example, Year 1 pupils were full of ideas when asked to write a review for the pantomime, 'Aladdin', which they had seen at the theatre the day before. Pupils enjoy being involved in well-presented activities.
- Most teachers have a good subject knowledge, particularly in terms of pupils using correct vocabulary for English and mathematics. However, there is a gap in teachers' understanding of how to deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. This includes the effective use of questions to deepen and develop their thinking.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils benefit enormously from having phonics taught early, in Nursery and Reception. Recent changes in the way in which phonics is taught have ensured that pupils are getting more opportunities to apply their skills to reading and writing activities. Pupils' phonics development is precisely tracked throughout school to enable teachers to closely monitor progress and quickly intervene when pupils are struggling.
- Relationships between staff and pupils in the school are a strength. Leaders and staff passionately believe in fostering trusting and respectful relationships in school. This has effectively laid foundations for good learning. There is a strong sense of nurture, which allows pupils to feel safe and secure to learn.
- The support that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are offered is broad, targeted and of good quality. Additional support is planned effectively, resulting in these pupils making good progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the progress

of these pupils. This is particularly evident in the support of pupils who have challenging behaviour. In these instances, they play an important role in ensuring that the teachers' and other pupils' attention is not diverted from the focus on learning.

- Pupils who struggle with their learning are identified well, and an effective range of learning opportunities are available to help them catch up.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, or who spoke to inspectors said that they feel that their children are taught well and make good progress in school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The importance placed on pupils' personal development and welfare is central and very visible in school. It is guided by the school's strong Catholic ethos and values. Staff and governors are passionate in their responsibility to ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils can learn.
- The school offers a good personal, social, emotional and health curriculum that is woven into all that the school does. Leaders consider it important to equip pupils with valuable skills that promote the value and importance of well-being, respect and being responsible and well-balanced citizens. For example, pupils enjoy their responsibilities as part of the chaplaincy team and as mentors for younger pupils. The latter are loved by the younger pupils who enjoy having someone looking out for them, and the role is valued by the older pupil as a chance to build their own self-esteem and sense of pride.
- Staff treat pupils with consideration and ensure that the school makes everyone feel welcome and valued. Adults model respectful behaviour in lessons, around school and in the way they engage with pupils. As a result, pupils behave similarly and are thoughtful and compassionate citizens.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View or spoke to the inspector praised the school and the work of the staff. The overwhelming majority said that their children are happy and well looked after. A number of parents were keen to say that their children enjoyed school and that staff are approachable. They commented on the staff's skills at nurturing and building confidence, and the way staff often go 'above and beyond' for the children.
- The vast majority of pupils throughout school are happy to talk about their learning. Pupils told inspectors how proud they are of their school and how they are well looked after by adults.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection were clear about what inappropriate behaviour is and said that incidents do happen but are rare. They are confident that teachers deal with any unfriendly or negative language towards pupils quickly. The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View or who spoke to the inspector said that the school deals appropriately with bullying or inappropriate behaviour and that when it does occur it is dealt with well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Pupils are generally eager and enthusiastic to participate in lessons. However, when pupils work without the support of an adult and the lesson is not sufficiently matched to their learning needs, a number of pupils lose concentration and interest in what they are doing. They become easily distracted, start to fidget and chat to their neighbour. This is not the case in upper key stage 2, where there is a more productive, industrious atmosphere in classrooms. These pupils show a very positive attitude and a thirst to learn.
- Elsewhere in school, pupils conduct themselves very well. They are polite and well mannered, open doors for each other and adults and are keen to smile and engage with visitors. Poor weather during the inspection meant that pupils spent most morning and lunchtime breaks in their classrooms. At these times, they were calm and relaxed and took delight in the responsibility of giving out the morning snack of toast or fruit to their peers. The school is a peaceful, orderly and purposeful place.
- Pupils consider behaving well to be very important and are regularly recognised for their good conduct. As a result, they are fully aware of how to behave and the consequences of poor behaviour. They said that incidents of inappropriate behaviour do happen but are rare, dealt with quickly by teachers and that pupils respond sensibly.
- A number of pupils have difficulties in managing their behaviour. They are well supported and managed to ensure that their behaviour does not get in the way of their learning and does not distract others. In the past, there has been a high number of fixed-term exclusions. However, the hard work of the pastoral team and the focus on improving the activities and sports available to pupils in the playground at lunchtimes has successfully addressed this issue. As a result, at the time of the inspection, no pupils had been excluded this academic year.
- The systems for checking absence are rigorous and conscientiously applied. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved and is now comparable to national averages. Pupils who are persistently absent are monitored closely. The leadership team has worked hard with this group of pupils and their parents and has had some notable success in increasing their attendance. The school's pastoral team is very successful at supporting pupils and families who might be struggling. The team is extremely well respected, and relationships with parents and pupils alike are strong.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes are not good because, despite some improvements, too few pupils make enough progress, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The progress of some pupils is not as good as it could be. They do not do well enough in reading and mathematics, most noticeably at the end of key stage 1 and through lower key stage 2. This is because leaders and teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and have not given enough attention

to the possibility of pupils achieving at greater depth or higher standards. Teachers have not used assessment effectively enough to provide pupils with sufficient challenge.

- At the end of key stage 1 in 2017, a below-average proportion of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, and only a small number of pupils achieved higher than the expected standards under the new national curriculum.
- At the end of key stage 2, pupils' achievement is better than at key stage 1. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in reading and mathematics is comparable to the national average and in writing is above average.
- Attainment and progress in reading and mathematics dipped considerably for Year 6 pupils in 2017. However, the decisive action of leaders to address this has ensured that attainment and progress are now improving in upper key stage 2. For example, leaders have ensured that staffing is stable and the quality of assessment information that is collected has improved. Assessment information and evidence from pupils' workbooks confirm that this drop in standards is unlikely to be repeated in 2018.
- Despite these improvements, the proportion of pupils achieving higher than the expected standard in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 is not good enough.
- Pupil premium funding is used to reduce barriers for disadvantaged pupils and give them access to all aspects of the curriculum. There have been significant improvements in the way in which disadvantaged pupils' progress is checked and followed. This process is now rigorous and detailed. As a result, there is good evidence to suggest that the vast majority of disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, are now making much better progress.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics at the end of Year 1 has improved year on year and is now consistently above national averages. Adults start teaching phonics in the Nursery class. This is built on in Reception and continues to be prominent throughout key stage 1.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. The support offered by teachers and teaching assistants is effective and ensures that pupils succeed in their learning.
- Current school assessment information suggests that progress is improving across the school. However, it is too soon to say whether this will have sufficient impact on outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 1 and lower key stage 2 by the end of the year.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Early years requires improvement because expectations are not high enough. Not enough children achieve the good level of development expected for children of a similar age nationally.
- Many children start school with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age. Leaders believed that children started school with skills and knowledge much lower

than this, which has led to their having expectations for children that are too low. As a result, not enough children are achieving all they are capable of and some are not as ready as they should be to start Year 1.

- The assessment information that teachers gather on a day-to-day basis is used well to plan a curriculum for children that is both interesting and fun. However, information is not always used precisely enough to plan specific activities that meet children's needs and challenge them sufficiently.
- Nursery and Reception classes are located in separate areas of the school and, as a result, the consistency of approach and manner across the classes can vary. However, routines are well established and classrooms are generally organised effectively to provide children with a varied learning environment. Adults demonstrate an appropriate subject knowledge. Activities are fun, capture the children's imagination and allow them to practise their skills. Children try hard to listen carefully and are eager to respond to adults' instructions. Adults are actively involved in the children's activities and play, which at the time of the inspection were based around Christmas and winter. For example, children playing outdoors enjoyed talking about the ice they found. They excitedly watched it melt in an adult's hand, exclaiming, 'Now it's water.'
- Teachers place a suitable importance on phonics, writing and mathematical skills. Children have regular chances to write and use number. Adults spend valuable time with children to practise their letters and sounds. The development of language and speaking is also a high priority, along with building self-confidence.
- Leaders have an appropriate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They take great care to ensure that safeguarding is effective and risk assessments for activities and events are thorough.
- Additional funding is used to provide resources and support for disadvantaged children. There are only a small number of children who are eligible for this funding in early years. Leaders have a good understanding of the impact this has on their learning and, like elsewhere in school, their progress is checked closely. As a result, given their starting points, disadvantaged children make good progress.
- Children's behaviour is good. Adults are quick to provide support to children to help them understand the importance of being polite and learning social skills such as taking turns and showing consideration for others. Children play and learn together well and are usually well motivated. As a child eagerly said to an inspector, 'I love joining in.' The strong emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment is evident from the very positive relationships adults have with children and children have with each other.
- Staff consider good relationships with parents as being important to establishing future positive attitudes to school life and encouraging parents to take an interest in their child's learning. Parents feel very positive about how much their child enjoys school and the progress they have made. Parents described the adults in early years as 'fantastic' and 'kind and approachable'.
- Adults have good-quality links with the local providers and invest time getting to know new families and prospective new children very well.

School details

Unique reference number	119604
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10043218

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	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Lynch
Headteacher	Mia Barlow (Associate headteacher)
Telephone number	01772 792572
Website	www.blessed.lancsngfl.ac.uk
Email address	head@blessedsacrament.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2013

Information about this school

- The Blessed Sacrament is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of 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 school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- 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 previous headteacher left her post at the end of the summer term 2017. Governors were not able to appoint a replacement in time. Therefore, with the support

of the diocese and local authority, they secured a headteacher from another local Catholic school. She has been in post for the autumn term, for four days a week, as the associate headteacher. She is unable to continue this role in the spring term and so will be replaced with another diocese-sourced associate headteacher. Meanwhile, the governing body is continuing to actively engage in the recruitment process for the school's permanent headteacher.

- The deputy headteacher was an existing member of staff in school who was appointed to the deputy role at the beginning of the autumn term 2017.

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 work in pupils' books, including the books of children in the early years.
- An inspector listened to a small number of pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the early years leader. They also met with the staff responsible for safeguarding, pastoral care and attendance and a group of middle leaders.
- An inspector met with five members of the governing body, including the chair. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority, and the inspector spoke to another representative on the telephone.
- Two group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with inspectors, and inspectors also spoke informally with pupils at playtimes and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to a staff questionnaire and talked to staff during the inspection to take account of their views.
- They also took account of 14 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and talked briefly with 22 parents before school.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: information on pupils' attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan; records of checks on the quality of teaching and the work of the governing body. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sandie La Porta	Ofsted Inspector
Clare McGarey	Ofsted Inspector

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