

St Ethelbert's RC Primary School

Melbourne Road, Deane, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 5RL

Inspection dates

31 October – 1 November 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher works effectively with the senior leadership team to ensure that a 'can do' culture exists in school. As a result, both staff and pupils are aspirational and strive to build on their existing performance.
- Governors are forward-thinking and effective in the support that they provide. They make a positive contribution to school improvement.
- Leaders ensure that pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. It provides a range of opportunities, both during school time and in extra-curricular activities, for pupils to enrich their learning through exciting activities and visits.
- Leadership is strong in the early years. Children enjoy a stimulating curriculum and teaching is effective. As a result, they are prepared well for Year 1.
- Pupils make strong progress in phonics. Their results in the phonic screening check are consistently in line with those seen nationally.
- Pupils are well cared for. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Overall, pupils behave well. They are polite and courteous.
- Historically, pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been below that seen nationally by the end of key stage 2. Pupils' progress over time in these subjects is improving, although attainment remains low at the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching is good. Current pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, in some classes, teachers do not always provide enough challenge so that the most able pupils reach their full potential.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of British values and relate them effectively to aspects of their learning. They have a clear understanding of, and respect for, diversity.
- Leaders' actions have ensured that disadvantaged pupils make good progress, especially in key stage 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress. Leadership in this area is effective in ensuring that pupils receive appropriate support for their needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the most able pupils receive consistent challenge so that a greater proportion achieve the higher standards.
- Continue to improve the progress and attainment made by key stage 2 pupils over time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is clearly aware of the contextual challenges faced by the school and noted during the inspection that, 'we make a difference here'. This was evident during the inspection. Leaders have a clear vision for the school. The school mission statement of 'love, care and share' shines out in all that they do.
- Senior leaders receive a range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills further. For example, connections made with a local university enable leaders to look in detail at 'leadership for powerful learning'. As a result, leaders are successfully developing the curriculum in areas such as reading, writing and mathematics. Subject leaders work well together to provide pupils with opportunities to make connections in their learning across the curriculum and to undertake learning activities that excite and engage pupils' thinking. The keen focus on leadership development ensures that the school is ambitious in its drive to improve.
- Leaders' work to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain is effective. Pupils speak confidently about British values. For example, pupils discussed a display created to mark Remembrance Day. They were able to explain how soldiers were fighting for individual liberty and to reinforce the rule of law. Pupils noted, 'We are very grateful for this.' Additionally, they spoke of Saint Ethelbert and could explain what British values they believed he represented. They were proud that their school was named after him.
- Leaders celebrate diversity in school. They place a strong focus on inclusion, providing focused learning opportunities for the wide range of pupils who need additional support. For example, pupils who are international new arrivals and have limited skills in speaking English receive effective support to catch up.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and that it contains many memorable learning experiences. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to work on whole-school topics which tie learning together across a wide range of subjects. As part of a whole-school 'super-learning' experience on the World Cup, for example, pupils worked together with other classes to explore the countries which took part in this event. This engaged the pupils and enabled them to produce work of a high standard in subjects such as mathematics, reading, writing and geography.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sports premium well to provide pupils with increased access to competitive sporting experiences within and beyond school. Sports coaches work with teachers to develop their skills in teaching PE, which ensures that the improved provision remains sustainable.
- Leaders and other staff weave pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development through all aspects of school life, including the curriculum. Through collective worship and lessons in personal, social and health education, pupils receive many opportunities for reflection.
- Leaders successfully use pupil premium funding to support the learning and attendance of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, attendance for disadvantaged pupils has improved and their current progress across the school is good. The school's provisional

performance information for 2018 shows that by the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils' progress is good.

- Leadership of teaching and learning is strong. Leaders work effectively with a range of external partners including the local authority, local primary and secondary schools and a university to provide teachers with broad range of professional development. When required, leaders provide focused support and challenge to bring about improvement.
- Leadership to support pupils with SEND is strong. Leaders use funding well to ensure that individual pupils receive the support they need to overcome any barriers to learning. As a result, most of these pupils make good progress throughout the school from their varying starting points.
- Leaders and teachers ensure that pupils' movement from one stage of their education to the next supports their well-being and their academic development. Leaders ensure that they provide additional support for vulnerable pupils to so that their transition addresses their individual needs.

Governance of the school

- Governors of St Ethelbert's RC Primary School are ambitious and determined in their drive to further improve this good school. They have carefully evaluated their own skills and use these well in their differing roles. This has been effective in ensuring that they provide leaders with challenge and support around the areas that need improvement.
- Governors know the school well because they are regular visitors. Governors look at pupils' work with leaders and visit classrooms. They talk to pupils about their learning in subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics which have been part of the school's improvement planning. As a result, governors have a clear understanding of the impact of leaders' efforts to develop the curriculum further.
- Governors receive a range of training and use it effectively. This enables individual governors to take on specific areas of responsibility and provide support and challenge, for example in areas such as safeguarding, pupil premium spending and provision for pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The single central record of checks on staff and visitors is up to date and compliant. Checks carried out on new members of staff and volunteers are thorough and well managed.
- The school works well with external agencies to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils receive the support they need to remain safe.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection were pleased with the school's procedures to care for pupils with medical needs. One parent, reflecting the views of others noted, 'I can't fault them for their care.'
- Staff receive regular training relating to safeguarding and they provide pupils with many opportunities throughout the curriculum to enable them to understand how to

keep themselves safe both in the real world and online. Consequently, the school remains a safe place for pupils to learn.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. This is because leaders provide them with a broad range of training and, where necessary, support teachers in developing their curriculum provision and classroom organisation. This has ensured that where teaching was historically less than good, significant improvements have been made.
- Teachers provide regular opportunities to enrich pupils' learning through educational visits and by inviting visitors into school. Teachers are aware that this gives pupils a range of opportunities that many pupils may otherwise not receive. Pupils who spoke to inspectors were very knowledgeable about their learning and could make effective connections between areas of learning. For example, after a whole-school 'super learning week' on food around the world, pupils spoke with strong understanding about a range of countries, discussing their cultures, traditions and geographical locations.
- Teachers work very hard to provide pupils across the whole school with a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These activities support pupils' learning in an effective manner. During the inspection, for example, the school choir was practising for a Christmas performance at a local centre by singing in Spanish and English.
- The teaching of reading has been a focus for school improvement. Leaders ensure that pupils have access to a wide range of quality books in classrooms and within the school's library. An increased focus across school on teaching the specific skills needed to develop reading comprehension has led to improved progress for pupils by the end of key stage 2.
- A consistent approach to teaching writing is now in place throughout school. Teachers ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum. This led to improvements in pupils' progress and has increased their engagement in the subject. During the inspection, pupils were proud to show an inspector their high-quality written work, which teachers display around the school.
- Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities in mathematics lessons to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. This provision has increased over time as teachers have undertaken training in this subject. As a result, work in pupils' books over time shows that they make stronger progress.
- Strong relationships exist between teachers and their pupils. Teachers use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding and to encourage them to consider ways to develop their learning further.
- The teaching of phonics is consistent across classes and pupils receive regular opportunities to practise the sounds that words make in subjects across the curriculum. As a result, the number of pupils who pass the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 remains in line with that seen nationally over time.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide focused support to enable pupils to catch up. This includes pupils with English as an additional language and the increasing number

of pupils who are international new arrivals. As a result, the progress these pupils make is broadly in line with that of other pupils in school.

- Teachers use assessment information well to ensure that they have a clear overview of pupils' strengths and areas where they need further support. Leaders are aware, however, that this is not always effective for the most able pupils. This has been the focus of training sessions for staff and there has been some impact. For example, provisional performance information at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 shows an increase in the number of disadvantaged pupils achieving at the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Nevertheless, in some lessons, most able pupils do not receive the challenge they require to develop their learning fully. This is because tasks are sometimes set at too low a level.
- Parents speak highly of the quality of teaching and learning in school and are pleased with the information that they receive from teachers about their children's progress. One parent, reflecting the views of many others noted, 'Staff have always kept in regular contact and have been very supportive with any issues taken to them.' Parents are also pleased with the time teachers take to provide additional learning support for their children where it is needed to help them to catch up.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to explore issues around bullying. For example, following a special event in school to raise pupils' self-esteem, pupils led a musical performance at their local church. This event focused on anti-bullying and celebrated diversity. As a result of such a focus over time, pupils say that bullying is very rare in their school and that they feel confident, happy and safe in school.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their learning. They wear their uniform with pride. Pupils understand the meaning behind the school logo on their sweaters and know how it links to the whole-school values that they hold so dear.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to support the well-being of other pupils. Pupils talk with pride about being 'bucket fillers'. This initiative, introduced by leaders, reminds pupils to identify strengths in others and celebrate them. Pupils understand that they should never be 'bucket dippers' as this would mean reducing the self-esteem and confidence of others by being unkind.
- Pupil chaplains play a key role in the life of the school, making a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. They note that their role is to spread God's faith around the school. These older pupils help to run the school chapel. They lead a range of activities with other pupils, including reading Bible stories, leading parts of collective worship and helping teachers to sort through and deal with issues in the 'worry box'. As a result, all pupils have valuable opportunities to reflect and, if they choose to, to pray.
- The school's 'well-being Wednesday' event ensures that, each week, pupils take time to consider issues around diversity, confidence and self-esteem. During the inspection

pupils showed inspectors the sticker on their sweaters which highlighted the current week's focus, 'whatever you do, do it well'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are kind and considerate. They conduct themselves well both inside school and while they are on the playground.
- Leaders are proactive in dealing with instances of poor behaviour. As a result, the number of fixed-term exclusions in school has declined. Overall, attendance is broadly in line with rates seen nationally and there has been an increase in attendance for disadvantaged pupils. This is because staff, including the school's attendance officer, work hard to ensure that pupils arrive at school on time on a regular basis.
- Pupils are aspirational. They understand the connection between good attendance, hard work and achieving their ambitions.
- Pupils value opportunities given to them to support the behaviour of other pupil in roles such as school councillors, lunchtime prefects and buddies for the younger children in Reception.
- Pupils particularly enjoy watching a TV programme about the news each morning. They say that this helps them to understand the world that they are living in. As a result, pupils spoken to during the inspection could talk with confidence about British values such as democracy and the rule of law.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders have placed a high priority on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in key stage 2. This is because, in this key stage, pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have been below the national average in recent years. This focus is proving to be successful and in 2018, pupils' progress and attainment in these subjects improved. However, although pupils make stronger progress by the end of key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in these subjects remains below the national average.
- Leaders have created an environment which promotes the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well. The work in current pupils' books and the school's own assessment information shows that pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics, from often low starting points, in the vast majority of classes. However, in some classes, the most able pupils sometimes complete work which is not well matched to their abilities and as a result do not achieve as well as they could.
- Current pupils make similar, strong progress in a wide range of subjects. In geography, for example, pupils talk with interest and understanding about their learning. Pupils spoke with confidence when pointing out countries and continents on various maps and were able to explain how their mapping skills had developed over time.

- Pupils acquire phonic knowledge well and receive regular opportunities to practise letters and sounds across many curriculum subjects. As a result, the proportion of pupils who achieve the phonics screening standard by the end of Year 1 has been broadly in line with the national average over recent years.
- In recent years, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has been broadly in line with that seen nationally. This remained the case in writing in 2018, but there was a slight decline in reading and mathematics. Leaders have already successfully addressed this issue and current pupils in key stage 1 are making strong progress in these subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. This is evident from the work in pupils' books and in the school's current performance information. In 2018, provisional performance information showed that the progress made by disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 had improved considerably, especially in reading and writing.
- Leaders use additional government funding well to provide focused support and additional focused teaching for pupils with SEND. As a result, these pupils make good progress throughout the school.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership is strong in the early years. As a result, provision for children is of a high standard.
- Children get off to a strong start and they experience a broad and balanced curriculum including phonics and early reading. In one lesson, the teacher's skilful modelling of the sounds that letters and words made resulted in pupils' vocabulary improving well. As a result of focused teaching, children make rapid progress from their varying starting points.
- Most children enter early years with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typical for their age, most notably in communication and language. From this point, children make rapid progress. This is because the teachers know the children well. They plan effective learning activities which they match closely to children's interests and needs.
- Teachers use resources effectively both in the classrooms and in outdoor learning areas to develop children's interest and understanding. Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skills effectively to develop the children's thinking.
- Children behave well in early years. They are cooperative and happy to share resources such as books. This is because teachers structure learning to enable children to develop well both socially and emotionally.
- Leaders assess children's learning regularly through 'in-the-moment planning'. This ensures that all children receive appropriately challenging activities across the curriculum.
- The Nursery and Reception classes and outdoor areas are a safe learning environment for children. In these environments, the children use resources safely. During the inspection, children were using sticks to stir 'cauldrons with potions in'. The children

used the sticks with care and were able to explain how and why the colours were changing.

- Parents speak highly of the early years provision. One parent, reflecting the views of many others, noted, 'Our children look forward to coming to school, they never want to leave.' Parents greatly value the many opportunities provided for them to 'stay and learn' with their children. The number of parents attending workshops in reading, writing and mathematics is increasing over time and leaders work hard to ensure that these are of benefit to parents when supporting their children at home. As a result of the positive partnership, parents provide teachers with valuable information to support their children's learning.
- Leaders use additional funding in an effective manner to provide additional support for children. This has ensured that more support is available for individual children and small groups. As a result, outcomes for these children have improved over time.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year is broadly in line with that seen nationally for all children, including those who are disadvantaged. Their progress, typically from low starting points, is also good. Such academic achievement together with well-developed social skills ensures that they are well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	105222
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10082064

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	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Townley
Headteacher	Mandy Messham
Telephone number	01204 333036
Website	www.st-ethelberts.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-ethelberts.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 March 2015

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils receiving support for SEND is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported with an education, health and care plan is slightly above average.
- The school receives additional funding through the pupil premium funding for a higher-than-average proportion of disadvantaged pupils.
- A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school runs a broad range of extra-curricular activities which take place before and after school
- The school provides full-time and part-time places for children in the Nursery class.
- The school is in an area of high deprivation.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including: information about pupils' attendance, school improvement plans, the school's own self-evaluation, safeguarding records, curriculum planning, information about managing teachers' performance and staff training records.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of 22 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey and 20 responses to the parent free-text online questions. Inspectors also considered responses made by parents to questionnaires sent out by leaders.
- Inspectors took account of seven responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and 21 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- An inspector met with a representative of the local authority who is the school's improvement adviser.
- An inspector met with the chair of the governing body and five other governors.
- Inspectors talked with pupils informally at playtimes, visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' movement around the school. Formal meetings also took place with pupils and a group of pupils joined an inspector on a learning walk around school.
- Inspectors looked at behaviour at the start and end of the school day and during breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors undertook a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. They listened to pupils read and talked to them about the books they enjoyed and those that they are currently reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, teachers and the leader of the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors carried out a detailed scrutiny of current progress and attainment information for all groups of pupils.
- An inspector analysed the school's attendance data.

Inspection team

Gill Pritchard, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Clare Nash

Ofsted Inspector

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