

St Boniface RC Primary School

Yew Street, Salford, Greater Manchester, M7 2HL

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

- As a result of variability in the quality of teaching over time, pupils' attainment, in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 has been inconsistent.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with information about how their work can be improved and, as a result, opportunities for pupils to learn from their mistakes are missed.
- In 2013, boys' attainment and the attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals was below that of their peers across the country.
- Sometimes the pace of teaching does not keep pace with how quickly pupils learn, particularly the most able pupils. As a result their progress is not as rapid as it could be.
- There is a lack of clarity concerning the roles and responsibilities of each member of the senior leadership team. This has led to unclear lines of accountability and the pace of school improvement not being as rapid as it could be.
- The targets for school improvement in the school development plan are not in an order of priority, so it is not clear which are the most important and should be done first to accelerate the pace of change.
- The headteacher with the support of the governing body has worked hard to overcome the consequences of the unavoidable number of staff changes; however, unsettled staffing over time has led to a lack of consistency in teaching quality and a consequent slowing of pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' behaviour both in lessons and around the school is consistently good. This contributes to a calm atmosphere in which pupils feel safe.
- The school's recently revised approach to the teaching of literacy and numeracy is reversing the decline in results evident from 2012 to 2013 in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching and the progress children make in the Early Years and Foundation Stage.
- The hard work, dedication and commitment of the headteacher and governors to improve the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 part-lessons taught by 10 different members of staff. Consequently, all class teachers were observed teaching.
- A number of separate meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, a group of class teachers and groups of pupils of different ages. Inspectors also met with a representative of the local authority, a representative of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford and three members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took the opportunity to hear some pupils read. This enabled them to assess the fluency of pupils' reading, determine pupils' understanding of what they had read and assess their attitudes to reading.
- A number of the school's documents were examined by inspectors including the school improvement plan, senior leaders' evaluation of how well the school is performing and the school's central record of the checks made on adults, working in the school, to determine their suitability to work with children.
- The school's attendance data and behaviour log were scrutinised as was the headteacher's analysis of pupils' attainment and progress data.
- Reports prepared by the local authority school improvement officer and from independent consultants working with the school staff to implement new initiatives were also considered.
- The inspectors also took into account the opinions expressed by parents they met at the end of the first day of the inspection, who had come to school to collect their children. However, they were unable to consider parents' views as expressed on Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View as there have been too few responses since the school's previous inspection.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Charles Lowry, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Anthony Buckley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school and is located about three miles to the north-west of Manchester City Centre.
- There are more boys in the school than girls but this is not consistent between year groups, with substantially more boys than girls in Year 2 and Year 3 but the reverse being true in Year 5.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is just under twice the national average. The pupil premium is extra funding the school receives to support the education of pupils eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The large majority of pupils who attend the school are of White British heritage and most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and who are supported at school action is well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is at least consistently good and all pupils achieve well in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - making sure that all teachers, including those on short-term contracts, use all the information they have on pupils' capability to plan activities that provide an appropriate degree of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils
 - bring all marking in the school up to the quality of the best so that pupils are clear about what is good about a piece of work, what they need to do to make it even better and then making sure that pupils act on their teachers' advice
 - making sure that teachers keep a close eye on how quickly their pupils are learning and then ensuring that their teaching matches the pace of that learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - reviewing the roles of leaders and managers to ensure that everyone is clear about their responsibilities and so that they can be held more closely to account for their professional practice and pupils' outcomes
 - reviewing and refining the current school development plan, identifying those priorities which are the most important and will have the biggest impact on pupils' outcomes and then address these first in order to accelerate the pace of change.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Over time there has been a declining trend in attainment at Key Stage 1, in reading and mathematics and in the attainment and progress pupils make in mathematics at Key Stage 2, particularly the most able pupils.
- In 2013, the gap in attainment at Key Stage 2 between boys and girls was wider than that found nationally, with boys' attainment in all core subjects being lower than that of the girls and also below that of their peers across the country. In addition, pupils eligible for free school meals and who are supported by the pupil premium attained less well than their peers in the school. Consequently, in 2013, they left St Boniface about two thirds of a national curriculum level behind their peers.
- The relatively recent introduction, by the headteacher, of commercial schemes to provide teachers with a structured approach to teaching literacy and numeracy has led to some welcome improvements in results. For example, in Year 1, pupils' attainment in phonics (the sounds that letters and groups of letters make) has increased by 11 percentage points, moving performance from below to above the 2013 national average. The attainment in phonics of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs has also improved compared to last year.
- The school's current data for the end of Key Stage 1 are showing that the proportion of pupils in Year 2 reaching expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has also increased when compared to 2013. The largest increases in attainment have been in writing and mathematics with pupils' attainment in both subjects now being comparable to 2013 national averages. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in writing in 2014 is not as high as the previous year and attainment in reading, although improving, remains below the 2013 national average.
- Teachers' assessment of the attainment of pupils in Year 6 shows that the proportion of pupils achieving the minimum expected Level 4 has increased in all three core subjects in 2014, so that they are now comparable with 2013 national averages. In addition, the school's data are showing that the gaps in attainment between the boys and girls, pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers, and pupils with special educational needs, are beginning to close.
- The school's data indicate that the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in mathematics has increased by 12 percentage points compared to 2013. This reverses the weaker performance in mathematics that has been evident over the last two years; however, the proportions of pupils making more than expected progress in reading remain low.
- Most children enter the Early Years and Foundation Stage well below the expected level of development for their age but, as a result of effective teaching in the Nursery and Reception Years, they make good progress.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching as a consequence of unavoidable but frequent changes in staffing have had a detrimental impact on pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 over the past two years.
- The standard of teachers' marking in pupils' books is of inconsistent quality. The most noteworthy marking and that which has the greatest impact on pupils' progress is where teachers make pupils aware of the strengths of a piece of work and give them clear advice on how they could make it even better. Pupils are then given opportunities to act on their teachers' advice and so learn from their mistakes. However, not all marking is of this quality; with some teachers' comments providing affirmation and praise but no signposts for improvement. There are also examples of teachers' marking that are unhelpful.
- To tackle inconsistencies in the quality of teaching of literacy and numeracy and give all teachers, including those new to the school, a framework for planning their lessons in

mathematics, reading and writing, the headteacher took the decision to introduce commercially available schemes. Although these schemes have only been in place for a relatively short time, there are indications that their use is leading to improved progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and writing. However, there is evidence that in some lessons teachers adhere too closely to the prescribed schemes and are not using them as a resource to plan activities that provide an appropriate degree of challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. Consequently, these pupils finish the work quickly and, as a result, the pace of teaching does not keep up with the pace at which these pupils learn.

- Where classroom practice is most effective teachers use the information they have about their pupils to plan activities that meet their needs, challenging them to think hard about what they are learning. Teachers use questions skilfully to check how well their pupils are following the work or to probe their understanding and so deepen it.
- The programme introduced in September 2013 to improve the quality of phonics teaching in Key Stage 1 has had a positive impact on pupils' reading skills. The Key Stage 1 pupils heard reading by inspectors, read fluently and used their phonic skills to successfully decode unfamiliar words. They showed that they had understood the text they had been given to read and spoke animatedly and enthusiastically about their books.
- Those parents spoken to by inspectors said that they feel their children are well taught.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' are invariably polite, well-mannered and courteous towards each other and their teachers.
- Pupils play well together. At break times inspectors observed them participating in organised games with clearly understood rules that were adhered to by participants, with other children, who were not involved, respecting the right of their peers to play unhindered.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and their sense of fairness and understanding of the difference between right and wrong provides evidence of their developing spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils' attitudes to their studies are equally strong. When the activities they are given to do are challenging and make them think, most pupils tackle them with purpose and try their best. Even when teaching is less than inspiring and the pace of learning is slow most pupils demonstrate patience and show respect for their teachers.
- Almost all pupils wear their uniform tidily. They show respect for the school grounds, buildings and the well-designed rockery at the front of school. This is reflected in the school environment being litter and graffiti free and carefully designed wall displays that are free from damage.
- Teachers' management of behaviour is effective. Consequently, the school is a calm and relaxed place of learning.
- Since the previous inspection senior leaders have taken decisive action to improve behaviour around the school. This has included governors holding panel meetings for those pupils whose behaviour gives cause for concern, and their parents. As a result the number of pupils who have been excluded from the school has shown a substantial decline since the most recent published information.
- The headteacher keeps a close eye on pupils' behaviour and monitors it rigorously. This enables senior leaders to take timely and effective action should any pupil's behaviour give cause for concern.
- Parents and pupils spoken to by inspectors said they felt behaviour was good in the school and has improved since the previous inspection. Parents also said that they feel school staff are approachable and that should they have any concerns they are listened to and their worries dealt with effectively.
- The staff and governors place the pupils at the heart of their work. This is demonstrated by the display of each pupil's self-portrait around the school, clearly showing that everyone matters and is valued equally for who they are.

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- When asked, pupils say that they feel safe. They are also confident that should they have any concerns these will be dealt with by the adults who work with them. This contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school and is reflected in their improving rates of attendance, which are now in line with the 2013 national average after having been below it for the previous two years.
- Those pupils who met with inspectors demonstrated their knowledge of many different forms of bullying including cyberbullying, homophobic bullying, racist bullying and other prejudice based behaviour. They say that there is little bullying in school now and that when it does occur their teachers deal with it consistently and effectively.
- The school's policies for keeping children safe, including the single central record of the checks made on adults to ensure that they are suitable to work with children, are compliant with regulations.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The roles and responsibilities of the school's senior leaders are not clear. As a result the responsibility for leading and managing the school falls too heavily on the shoulders of the headteacher. Consequently, she is taking the lion's share of the responsibility for implementing the myriad of school improvement initiatives and, as a result, the pace of school improvement is not always as rapid as it could be.
- The headteacher and governing body have worked hard to manage the consequences of the unavoidable absences of a number of teachers. However, they are acutely aware of the difficulties in recruiting staff to fill short-term vacancies and have taken decisive action when temporary staff have not met the school's expectations. Nevertheless, this staffing turbulence has had an impact on pupils' attainment and progress particularly that of the most able pupils.
- The headteacher and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and those areas that need further development. This knowledge has been used to identify the priorities in the school development plan and the actions that need to be taken to improve the school. However, the priorities are not in a particular order so it is not obvious which are the most important and should be dealt with first. In addition the demands on the headteacher are high as she is taking sole responsibility for delivering most of the actions over a limited period of time.
- The quality of teachers' work and in particular their classroom practice is regularly monitored by the headteacher. She uses a range of evidence including observing lessons and looking at the work the pupils do in their books. Consequently, she has been able to identify strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and ensure that appropriate training is provided for those teachers who require it. This has included visits to other schools to observe effective teaching and the sharing of good practice within the school. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and, consequently, recent improvements in pupils' outcomes. However, the headteacher is acutely aware of the disruption to pupils' learning caused by the number of temporary staff that have had to be employed by the school. She has worked hard to bring much more consistency to the pupils' learning experience and the use of commercial schemes for the teaching of literacy and numeracy is enabling her to do this effectively.
- A policy for managing teachers' performance has been agreed for use in the school, which makes explicit the links between a teacher's performance and movement up the pay scale. However, this policy is only in its first year of operation and has yet to be used to determine an individual's salary progression.
- The school's drive to promote equality of opportunities is developing. Although, over time the achievement of some groups of pupils has been below expectations, for example pupils eligible for free school meals and the most able pupils, the school staff are working to make up for past weaknesses in the quality of teaching.
- The leadership and management of the school's programme to improve the teaching of phonics and early writing are both strong and effective. As a result the progress of pupils in literacy in Key Stage 1 is accelerating. This is certainly the case in phonics.

- The headteacher and her colleagues' use of the additional funding the school receives to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority is becoming increasingly effective. The provision, this year, of extra teaching in literacy and mathematics is accelerating the progress of targeted groups, and the gaps in attainment between pupils supported by this additional funding and their peers are starting to close. In addition the employment, by the governors, of specialist staff to provide support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is leading to evident improvements in behaviour and attendance.
- The extra finance the school receives from the sports premium (money made available to the school from central government to improve physical education in primary schools) has been used to fund the provision of members of staff to supervise sporting activities at lunchtime, purchase additional sports equipment and engage a coach for team sports. This is enabling the school to promote healthier lifestyles and involve more pupils in sport. One notable success, this year, has been that of the Year 6 boys' football team who were crowned local champions for their age group.
- The local authority provides good support and challenge. The school improvement officer has carried out an in-depth check on the school's progress against each of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors at the school's previous inspection and provided timely and appropriate guidance on this to senior leaders and governors. The roles and responsibilities of the governing body have been reviewed by local authority officers resulting in a more streamlined and effective system of governance. The local authority's knowledge of the school has been used to good effect to broker a link with a local leader of education to work with the headteacher and support her senior leadership role. Teachers have also benefitted from the work of external consultants to improve the quality of the teaching of literacy and numeracy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the previous inspection the work of the governing body has been reviewed by the local authority. As a result a more streamlined and effective structure of committees is in place to provide support to the headteacher and her colleagues in their work to improve the school. However, they are aware that there is a lack of clarity concerning the roles and responsibilities of leaders and managers, which is blurring lines of accountability and making it difficult for governors to effectively challenge individual members of the senior leadership team. This is leading to a slower pace of change. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They collect first-hand evidence on the quality of teaching, for example by scrutinising work in pupils' books, and are in attendance at parents' evenings to collect parents' and s' opinions about the school. Consequently, they have an accurate and well informed view of the quality of teaching in the school and the standards achieved by pupils. They have demonstrated their sensitivity to parents' views about the school. For example, as a result of parents' requests the school now has breakfast and after-school clubs. This demonstrates the school's support for parents in providing before and after school child care. The governing body have agreed arrangements for the performance management of the teachers, including how their performance is linked to pay progression. For the permanent staff these arrangements are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching. They keep a close eye on how the extra funding the school receives from the pupil and sports premiums is being spent and the impact both funding streams are having on pupils. Since the previous inspection they have availed themselves of the training opportunities provided online or by the local authority. They say that this has increased their confidence to carry out their roles effectively. The governing body are ensuring that statutory requirements for keeping children safe are being met.

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	105962
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	432151

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	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Archer
Headteacher	Julie Bainbridge
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2013
Telephone number	0161 792 5659
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	stboniface.primaryschool@salford.gov.uk

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