

St William of York Catholic Primary School

Nugent Road, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 3DE

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2017

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 new headteacher is a powerhouse for improvement. Her determined leadership and the positive impact of her actions since being appointed to the school's senior leadership team is rapidly addressing a legacy of some underachievement brought about by previously weak teaching.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, have high expectations and are ambitious. They are committed to providing a high-quality education. Leaders' well-considered actions have brought about improvements to the quality of teaching.
- Children in the early years make good progress from their starting points and are well prepared for key stage 1 because of the quality of teaching they receive. However, a small proportion of the children do not make the progress required in particular aspects of learning to ensure that they attain a good level of development or exceed their learning goals.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. Pupils' self-esteem, confidence and aspirations are promoted strongly through a wide range of opportunities, including undertaking roles of responsibility.
- Pupils like school and feel safe. Nearly all pupils demonstrate impressive conduct.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good. Teachers have high expectations and good levels of subject knowledge, which they use to promote learning well.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, now make good progress in a wide range of subjects across the curriculum. They are rapidly catching up with what they have missed due to previously weak teaching. However, there are still some differences in the progress made by disadvantaged and other pupils, and between girls and boys.
- Occasionally, teachers' over-eagerness to share good practice with their classes means that they interrupt pupils' concentration and work.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying and know how to stay safe in the community and while socialising online because of the high-quality teaching they receive.
- A very small number of pupils, who do not attend as frequently as they should, do not have appropriate reasons for their absence.
- Governors have not ensured that curriculum information published on the website meets requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that governors rigorously check that the information published on the school's website meets required standards
 - developing governors' use of subject leaders' knowledge and expertise to keep the governing body informed of the impact of actions to improve pupils' outcomes in each subject area.
- Enhance the successful initiatives that have improved the quality of teaching so that:
 - differences in the progress made between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally diminish further, particularly in reading and mathematics in key stage 2
 - boys improve their progress in reading, writing and mathematics and diminish the differences with the progress made by girls.
 - ensure that teachers carefully consider when best to interrupt the flow of pupils' working so as not to slow progress.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years by ensuring that the most able children are identified quickly and that greater proportions exceed their learning goals.
- Reduce the rate of persistent absence for boys and disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school's current leadership team has rapidly and successfully addressed weaknesses in leadership and teaching that occurred during a period of considerable staff turbulence. However, the legacy of weak teaching still lingers in some of the outcomes of older pupils.
- The headteacher is a powerhouse for improvement. Her high expectations and tenacious eagerness place the intention to provide an excellent education for pupils at the heart of all her developments.
- Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because of their insightful monitoring. They work closely as a team with staff and governors and have developed a clear vision for improvement. Their determination, commitment and effective use of performance management and carefully considered appointments have led recently to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have high expectations and hold teachers and teaching assistants closely to account for their impact on pupils' learning. They challenge rigorously any underperformance and are taking appropriate actions to deal with any remaining underperformance.
- Leaders' planning for school improvement is clear and effective. It includes appropriate priorities based on thorough evaluation of the school. Regular reviews of the impact of actions by leaders and governors ensure the rapid pace of improvement. Effective use of educational professionals from the local authority and the diocese provide appropriate mentoring for the headteacher, who is new to headship.
- Subject leaders, some of whom are new to their roles, lead their subjects well. They carefully monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in their subject. Subject leaders make effective use of external experts to improve teachers' knowledge and skills and to enrich the opportunities for pupils' learning. For example, a resident artist develops teachers' and pupils' subject knowledge through training and work in classrooms.
- Leaders demonstrate a deep understanding of the barriers to learning faced by pupils. Leaders' appropriate use of the pupil premium funding ensures that disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able or those disadvantaged pupils for whom English is an additional language, now receive a good quality of education and achieve well. Additional precise coaching sessions ensure that individual pupils receive the help they need to make strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders' good use of the additional primary school sports funding has resulted in strong improvements in pupils' participation in sports and in their adoption of healthier lifestyles. Leaders have focused their use of funding to provide additional sporting activities that go beyond the core national curriculum entitlement. Additional sporting clubs and activities, including cheerleading, football and adventurous activities, are extremely popular and strongly boost pupils' interest and participation in sport. The establishment of a wide range of sports teams and the participation in local sporting

festivals and competition is new to the school and has been implemented well by current leaders.

- Leaders place pupils' welfare and well-being at the heart of all they do. This is a caring school where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is carefully and strongly nurtured. This is particularly evident in the way pupils of all year groups interact and care for each other. For example, older pupils act as buddies to help younger, less-confident readers improve their reading skills, while members of the school's charity team raise funds to support local, national and international appeals.
- Leaders make good use of the additional funding they receive for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to promote their learning effectively. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities participate in the full range of activities and life of the school. All pupils are treated with understanding and respect. Leaders promote equality, including that relating to sexual orientation and gender identity, strongly and effectively.
- Parents are well informed about life in school and their children's progress through regular newsletters, individual reports and information events. They overwhelmingly support the school and recognise the caring ethos, strongly promoted by staff, as one of the school's key strengths.
- Leaders monitor attendance rigorously and take appropriate steps to challenge and support parents whose children are absent. However, there is a small number of pupils whose parents do not ensure that they attend school as often as they should.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils. It is carefully designed to ensure that pupils systematically develop their knowledge and skills in subjects and provides teachers with an effective framework by which to accurately assess pupils' progress and attainment. The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development strongly and equips pupils well for their next stages of education.
- Effective promotion of fundamental British values is woven throughout the curriculum. Pupils have a good understanding of the rule of law, democracy and the breath of modern British culture.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is effective. Governors, many of whom are new to the governing body, share the vision and commitment to improvement held by leaders and staff. They know their school well because of the quality of the information they receive from the headteacher and other senior leaders. They visit the school regularly and speak with teachers and pupils. Consequently, they understand how teachers are going about raising standards. Governors plan to make more effective use of the expertise of subject leaders to help to keep them informed about the impact of actions in subjects, but have not fully implemented these plans.
- Governors take appropriate actions to keep knowledge of their responsibilities up to date. All governors have attended appropriate training as part of their induction.
- Governors have secure understanding of the school's policy for managing performance, including its link to teachers' pay, and ensure that it is robustly applied.

- Governors have not ensured that the content of the school’s website meets the requirements relating to the curriculum.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and are followed meticulously. Statutory checks are carried out on the suitability of staff to work with children, including those members of staff who are employed by the local authority or from charities who regularly work on site. Appropriate training ensures that staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding and are vigilant about the potential risks pupils may face. Records are fit for purpose and meticulously kept. Leaders share information effectively with parents and appropriate authorities, such as social services, to ensure pupils’ safety.
- Governors have ensured that appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school’s internet connection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge in a wide range of subjects, including English, mathematics and art. Pupils are inspired to learn through interesting activities. For example, in key stage 2, pupils developed understanding of the importance of colour blocking and the use of a limited palette through a study of the work of L.S. Lowry.
- Reading and writing are taught systematically across the school using strategies to develop pupils’ skills and confidence quickly, including those who speak English as an additional language. Regular writing activities, which link closely to studies in other subjects, ensure that pupils develop their abilities to apply their writing skills. Teachers seize opportunities that give pupils the chance to write about real events. For example, the production of newspaper reports about the theft of the imitation grass from the early years outdoor learning area ignited pupils’ creativity when writing about their dismay and anger at its loss.
- The quality of teaching of mathematics has significantly improved. Teachers have the confidence to help all groups of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who are the most able, to deepen their understanding. Pupils have good knowledge and master their mathematical skills well. For example, in key stage 1, pupils of all abilities develop their skills in using fractions by solving written problems that are well matched to their abilities and then explaining the strategies they use to reach their answers.
- The quality of teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics is good. Teachers consistently demonstrate the same high expectations in other subjects across the curriculum as they have in mathematics and English. Pupils’ work in books is of a consistently high standard across all the subjects they study. Teachers develop pupils’ knowledge systematically. They frequently assess pupils’ understanding and use their findings well to inform their plans. When necessary, they quickly change their intended actions to address misconceptions. For example in key stage 2, following a review of pupils’ first drafts, a teacher changed part of her planned lesson to reinforce the

effective use of quotations in writing a diary entry.

- Teachers and other adults ask searching questions to probe and develop pupils' understanding. For example, in key stage 1, a teaching assistant used effective questions with pupils who have significant special educational needs and/or disabilities linked to behaviour and communication. As a result, pupils in this group developed their vocabulary and confidence and constructed clear and precise instructions. Pupils, many of whom have limited concentration and language skills, quickly develop their knowledge and respond to questions with more sustained confidence and a broadening vocabulary.
- Teachers use homework well to ensure that pupils practise and embed the skills and knowledge taught in lessons. Pupils read at home more frequently because of well-established book-sharing schemes run by the school. Leaders provide a homework club and give priority to pupils who may find it difficult to work at home. Dedicated space at the school's breakfast club provides pupils with an environment to work quietly with teachers and teaching assistants. This ensures that pupils who may find it difficult to work at home have appropriate support and facilities to continue their learning.
- Teachers make good use of the school's skilled and committed teaching assistants to deliver effective, targeted support that appropriately challenges pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants are trained well and frequently demonstrate their knowledge and skills by leading learning effectively in a range of activities. Some teaching assistants undertake additional management roles that provide good support for teachers.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects and learning and have high expectations of all groups of pupils in lessons. However, sometimes teachers' over-eagerness to share good practice or give additional advice interrupts pupils' work and slows the pace of learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their school. They wear their uniform with pride and relish the opportunity to undertake a wide range of roles and responsibilities, which they do with vigour. Pupils ensure the safety and well-being of their peers when acting as corridor monitors during lunchtimes. They regularly organise charitable events to help others and support adults who run whole-school activities. On one occasion during the inspection, the headteacher arrived to take a whole-school assembly to find all the resources had been set up for her by pupils from the school's chaplaincy team.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in and out of school, including while using the internet and socialising online, because of the guidance they receive. Safety, well-being and online safety are carefully woven throughout the curriculum and taught well through many different subjects and strategies. As a result, pupils confidently use technology and know the correct actions to take if they have any concerns. Younger pupils develop good personal hygiene because teachers and other adults strongly promote the

necessary skills.

- Extra-curricular activities abound and contribute greatly to pupils' personal development. The breakfast club is free to all and ensures that pupils are well set for a day of learning. Clubs include a wide range of different sports, homework, drumming, French, computing and cookery. They develop personal interests and useful skills that ensure that pupils leave well equipped to be positive contributors to society.
- The school has excellent relationships with outside agencies. Leaders are proactive in referring any concerns that may place children at risk of harm to the appropriate authorities, and following up actions to ensure that pupils remain safe.
- Leaders' strong promotion of fundamental British values ensures that pupils have a secure understanding of the rule of law and modern British institutions. Pupils take part in democratic processes, such as mock elections and formal debates.
- Pupils demonstrate high levels of understanding of the concepts of equality and diversity because of their strong promotion, which is well knitted into the curriculum. For example, work on display from older pupils shows a deep understanding of sexuality, including gender identity, because of the sensitive and effective teaching they receive.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different types of bullying, including those related to gender or found online. They play an active and effective part in the school's work to prevent bullying. Pupil play leaders work alongside members of staff at play times to engage pupils in constructive activities and to identify and support pupils who may feel left out. Pupils who spoke with inspectors were appalled at the thought of bullying in their school and found it difficult to recollect any incidents. They are confident that adults will deal effectively with any incidents that do occur.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and each other. They welcome visitors and willingly engage in articulate conversations about their work, and school life. Pupils' movement around the school is calm and orderly because of well-established routines.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, and consequently attendance is good, and for many groups, including non-disadvantaged pupils and girls, it is higher than the national average. Overall attendance is above the national average and improving. However, the persistent absence rates for a few boys, who are also disadvantaged, are above the national average.
- Leaders' use of exclusions has over time been higher than the national average. However, meticulous record-keeping shows that exclusions are only used as a last resort and are measured responses to the behaviour of pupils. Appropriate measures are in place to ensure that pupils' learning is not disadvantaged by exclusion. The numbers of exclusions are now low. They are rare events because leaders' actions and better-quality teaching have effectively promoted good behaviour in the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils have been variable since the last inspection. The progress made by pupils in key stage 2, particularly in reading, slowed in 2015 and in 2016 reduced considerably from the strong outcomes seen in 2014. Disadvantaged pupils' differences in progress and attainment with others widened during this period of staff turmoil. Work in pupils' books shows that leaders' effective actions have improved pupils' outcomes strongly and they now make good progress in their learning. However, older pupils' outcomes and rates of progress from their starting points have been affected by a legacy of weak teaching that is no longer evident in the school. There are still differences in the progress made from their starting points between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, and between girls and boys. The gaps are diminishing rapidly but still require reducing further.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the key stage 1 assessments in 2016 dropped significantly compared with the previous year and was below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. No pupils made sufficient progress from their starting points to reach greater depth. However, pupils currently in key stage 1 now do much better. They confidently apply their mathematical skills to solve challenging mathematical problems and demonstrate a good understanding of phonics to decode unfamiliar words.
- In 2016, pupils left key stage 2 with progress in reading that was well below the national average, whereas their progress in mathematics and writing was in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 in writing and mathematics in 2016 was in line with national averages, and similar to previous years. However, in reading, the proportion attaining the expected standard was below the national average. Things are now very different. Pupils read fluently and confidently, and are able to analyse texts incisively to find the inferred information buried within them. Pupils frequently complete interesting written reflections that share, on displays around the school, their opinions on the books they have read.
- The work in current pupils' books, including those who are disadvantaged and those who are the most able, shows that they make increasingly rapid progress because of the better-quality and more-systematic teaching they now receive. Pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics is of a high standard. Most-able disadvantaged pupils, supported to learn the cello using the pupil premium funding, eagerly demonstrate their good knowledge and skills in music, and participate in concerts around the locality. Knowledge and skills in art are well developed in all year groups. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of a wide range of artistic techniques, including the effective use of tone and colour to create high-quality products.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language do well and make good progress from when they enter the school, to catch up quickly with their peers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points because of the effective support and good teaching they receive.
- In 2016, the proportion of pupils attaining the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check showed sustained improvement and was close to the national average. Nearly all pupils who do not attain the required standard in Year 1 do so by the time

they leave the key stage because of the good support that they receive.

- The school's own data shows that approximately seven out of 10 pupils across the school are currently attaining the standard of work and knowledge that is expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. It also shows that differences in outcomes still exist between the disadvantaged pupils and others, and between sexes, particularly for older pupils. However, these differences in outcomes are diminishing rapidly.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The teacher responsible for the early years provides aspirational leadership. She is strongly focused on providing the high-quality provision that children deserve that is safe, nurtures and develops children's relationships with adults and prepares them to 'fly' on their learning journey.
- Children are polite and courteous. Children are keen to learn. They play and collaborate well together. Consequently, children swiftly develop their inquisitiveness and social skills.
- Parents are actively involved in their children's learning because of the sustained efforts of the early years staff to encourage and engage with them. Weekly planned sessions for parents to visit and work with their children provide excellent opportunities for teachers and other adults to discuss children's needs and celebrate their achievements. Parents are well informed about their children's progress. Parents who spoke with inspectors were overwhelming positive about the impact that the department has on their children's education.
- Children are kept safe because well-trained and vigilant staff implement the school's safeguarding policies with rigour and act quickly to deal with any concerns. Effective partnerships with external agencies, including the local authority early years specialists, health and social care professionals, and other educational providers, ensure that staff are well trained and that children receive the appropriate support they need to thrive, make good progress and behave well.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants go the extra mile to provide children with a vibrant, engaging and well-organised environment in which to learn. All staff in the early years are rightly proud of their outdoor provision and make best use of it to engage children in productive and challenging learning activities. Teachers and teaching assistants frequently use questioning well to probe and develop children's understanding. Adults actively engage in play to promote learning and to ensure that they capitalise on children's interests to extend knowledge. For example, when a child was bathing a baby doll from a different race, a teaching assistant used well-considered questions to get him to identify his strategies to sequence getting it dry and dressed. Adults' high-quality modelling of writing and consistent encouragement help children to develop their writing skills from an early age. Teachers sometimes do not use the school's tracking systems sharply enough to ensure that the most able children are quickly identified and supported to learn in greater depth.
- The vast majority of children enter the Nursery class with levels of development below

that typical for their age. Approximately one-third of children have levels of development that are significantly below that which is typical. They typically have more limited skills in communication, language and literacy, social development and their understanding of the world. All groups of children, including those who are disadvantaged, the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points. In 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was close to the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving a good level of development has improved rapidly to close the difference with other children nationally.

School details

Unique reference number	105226
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10003329

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gareth Smyth
Headteacher	Clare Lightbown
Telephone number	01204 333522
Website	www.st-williams.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	office@st-williams.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 May 2012

Information about this school

- St William of York Primary is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The school provides a breakfast club that is available to all pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

- The school does not meet the requirements on the publication of information about the content of its curriculum on its website.
- There have been significant turmoil and changes in staffing, including senior leadership and governance in recent years, which have now been successfully resolved.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons and looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils reading and talked with pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the leader of the early years and a range of subject leaders. Inspectors spoke with representatives of the governing body and the local authority's and diocese's school-improvement advisers who work with the school. They held telephone conversations with the local authority's strategic leader for school improvement and the diocese of Salford's deputy director of education.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and staff and took account of the three responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the staff questionnaires. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.

Inspection team

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