

# Banks St Stephen's CofE School

Greaves Hall Avenue, Banks, Southport, Merseyside PR9 8BL

## Inspection dates

20–21 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
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 school that requires improvement

- In 2017, pupils' progress in writing at the end of key stage 2 was in the lowest 10% of all schools nationally. Leaders' actions to improve pupils' progress in writing have not been rapid enough.
- Leaders' plans do not provide clear enough targets for improvement. Plans do not set high enough expectations for pupils' outcomes.
- A large turnover of staff in the last few years has hindered leaders' ability to bring about the necessary improvements in different curriculum areas. Middle leaders are at the early stages of their development.
- Teachers do not intervene effectively to prevent common mistakes in pupils' writing from persisting over time. There is a lack of challenge for pupils, especially the most able.
- The school's own information about the performance of pupils does not show sufficient improvements to the current pupils' progress and attainment in writing in key stage 2.
- Senior leaders are still grappling with some areas of the curriculum. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning in science, geography and history.
- Work set in writing, science, geography and history does not consistently challenge some of the most able pupils.
- Governors do not evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the school with enough precision. This includes the use of the pupil premium funding.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have demonstrated their ability to bring about improvements in some areas of the school. Pupils' progress in both reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have improved.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. This is because of the highly positive relationships that pupils have with staff.
- The quality of provision in the early years is good. The early years leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average. This is an improving trend over the last three years.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders' plans to improve the school set high expectations by providing clear, specific and demanding targets against which to measure the impact of their actions
  - leaders and governors evaluate the effectiveness of actions taken to improve the school with greater precision, for example in the use of pupil premium funding
  - middle leaders are provided with support to lead improvements in the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
  - teachers learn from and build on the good practice evident in the school in subjects other than English and mathematics
  - there is greater challenge for the most able pupils, particularly in writing and science.
- Improve pupils' outcomes in writing at key stage 2 by ensuring that:
  - effective actions are taken more rapidly to develop pupils' writing by providing challenging tasks to match their next steps in learning
  - common mistakes in pupils' work are addressed more effectively so that these do not persist over time.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders' response to the low attainment of pupils in writing at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2017 has not been swift enough. Progress was low in 2015, before improving the following year. However, these improvements have not been sustained. Although the progress in pupils' books is better in key stage 1, the lingering effects of staffing changes in key stage 2 have left pockets of low progress and attainment in pupils' writing.
- Leaders' plans to improve the school do not include specific targets. This means that leaders and governors are not clear about how they will measure the impact of their actions to improve the school. These plans do not set high enough aspirations for staff and pupils. Leaders' and governors' evaluation is not sharp enough to inform future plans because they cannot assess whether actions have been successful or not.
- Leaders' efforts to improve the school since the last inspection have been hampered by a high turnover of staff. The headteacher has tackled some of the weakest teaching. Leaders have brokered effective support from the local authority. This has been key in supporting staff to raise the quality of teaching and learning in the school, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium is not sharp enough. Plans lack clarity regarding how effective leaders expect their actions to be. The targets for the funding are too vague and lack clear measures of success. This means that leaders and governors do not review the overall effectiveness of the funding allocation well enough to evaluate the impact this has on pupils' progress or to inform their future plans.
- Many middle leaders are new to their roles. They are at the early stages of monitoring the effectiveness of their subjects and cannot demonstrate how they have improved pupils' outcomes in a range of subjects. Leaders are aware that there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum. They have not had time to be able to address these effectively. The broader curriculum does not consistently develop pupils' skills in science, history and geography across different year groups.
- Leaders' focus on improving the range of pupils' vocabulary has boosted the development of pupils' ability in reading. Leaders have fostered pupils' pride in their school library, which offers a good range of books.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum enables pupils to progress well in mathematics. This is enhanced through additional mathematics sessions for some of the older pupils who have the opportunity to attend a local secondary school to work on challenging problems. This strategy supports the school's efforts to prepare pupils well for their next steps in education.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Leaders ensure that they promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of equality.

## Governance of the school

- Governors are starting to ask more questions about pupils' progress and attainment. They have a good overview of many aspects of the work of the school. They ensure that the management of staff performance is rigorous, including that of the headteacher.
- Governors understand how the physical education and sport funding makes a positive difference to pupils through the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and sports that are on offer. This funding is used successfully.
- Governors cannot say how much difference is made with pupil premium funding because the targets set for its use are not clear enough. The minutes of meetings show that governors have started to request more information about the impact of leaders' actions.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. This includes from different forms of bullying. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when online.
- Staff have a very good awareness of safeguarding and they contribute to the vigilant culture within the school. All staff understand their responsibilities for keeping pupils safe.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding is a priority. They have all undertaken relevant training and some have been trained in safer recruitment.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- Teachers' expectations for pupils' written work are not consistently high enough across the school. Sometimes pupils cannot express what they are learning because this has not been explained clearly enough. Work is not matched to the abilities of different groups of pupils and there is a lack of challenge for the most able pupils. Pupils persistently make the same mistakes in their writing despite these being corrected by staff. Pupils make only modest gains in their written work in key stage 2. However, there are early signs of recovery in key stage 1, where pupils' progress is better.
- The quality of teaching and learning in the wider curriculum varies too much from year group to year group. The work in pupils' books in science, geography and history is not matched to the different abilities of pupils. There is a lack of skills development in subjects such as science. For example, pupils' investigative skills are not built on progressively as pupils move throughout the school. There are pockets of stronger practice. For instance, pupils in Year 4 are more successful in their science work because they have the opportunity to explain their findings from different investigations. In other subjects, such as music, there is the promotion of very strong skills and the use of subject-specific language.

- In contrast, pupils' mathematics work demonstrates that they are making good progress. Problem-solving and reasoning skills are taught well and build on pupils' prior learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 consolidate their number skills before moving on to solve more complex calculations and problems. They justify their answers well. This is also evident in the work completed across key stage 2.
- Inspectors found that pupils read well. Younger pupils use their phonic strategies well to read unfamiliar words. They confidently read as part of classroom activities. Staff have brought about improvements in pupils' progress in reading over the last three years through a focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and a love of reading.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities generally make good progress from their starting points. They receive effective support that targets the next steps in their learning.
- Older pupils are positive about the homework that they receive. They feel that this is manageable and that it is preparing them well for the next stage in their education.
- The relationships between staff and pupils create a positive atmosphere where pupils are attentive and enjoy their learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They confidently apply themselves to their work. They have positive attitudes towards all aspects of learning.
- Pupils show respect for the views and opinions of others. They display the Christian values of the school.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities they have to take on responsibilities. Older pupils lead activities at lunchtimes for other pupils to keep them active and engaged.
- A small number of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, raised concerns about bullying in the school. Inspectors spoke to pupils across key stage 2 classes. All pupils that inspectors spoke to said that bullying is not frequent and that instances are dealt with decisively by staff. They say that they feel safe from bullying. Pupils are aware of the school policy and have strategies to actively prevent bullying from occurring.
- Pupils are unwaveringly pleasant and polite. They are a credit to their parents and the staff at the school.
- Pupils who join the school during the year say that they are made to feel welcome by staff and pupils alike. Leaders ensure that these pupils are nurtured to become part of the school. Parents value the school's inclusive ethos.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils' conduct throughout the day is good. There is no disruption to learning as a result of poor behaviour.
- Pupils say that some derogatory language is used by a small number of pupils. The pupils that inspectors spoke to agree that teachers tackle this well so that instances are rare.
- Leaders have ensured that there are consistent systems in place to support pupils with their behaviour where there is a need. They are committed to doing the very best for each pupil in their care.
- Leaders are aware of those pupils who are persistently absent. They ensure that appropriate strategies are in place to support pupils to ensure good attendance. Presently, attendance is just below the national average. However, leaders take all reasonable actions to reduce absences wherever possible.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- For the last two years attainment at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils achieved above age-related standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2017 this was due to pupils' progress in writing, which placed the school in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. Despite some recent improvements, the work in pupils' books and the school's own assessment information demonstrates that attainment and progress in writing across key stage 2 have not fully recovered from the low progress experienced in 2015 and 2017.
- The work in pupils' books shows a good rate of progress in mathematics. This is because the school has a clear progression of skills planned and provides opportunities for pupils to apply their reasoning skills by solving problems and justifying their answers.
- In 2017, the progress of disadvantaged pupils at the end of key stage 2 was broadly in line with the national averages for reading and mathematics but significantly lower than the national average in writing and lower than other pupils in the school. Disadvantaged pupils currently at the school make similar progress to their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in reading in key stage 2. They read with increasing fluency and expression as they move through the school.
- At key stage 1 the work in pupils' books shows good progress in writing and mathematics. Pupils' phonic work enables them to read well.
- Throughout the school, the lack of consistent skills development in science, history and geography means that pupils' progress and attainment in these subjects require improvement.
- Pupils' writing and science books show that similar work is set for all ability groups. The most able pupils are not provided with enough challenge to achieve the standard of which they are capable.

## Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed. Despite several staffing changes, the focus of the early years leader ensures that provision matches children's needs.
- Children's learning records accurately represent their progress. Detailed observations chart children's progress throughout Nursery and Reception. Assessments and the school's published data show that children make good progress during their time in the early years.
- The new Nursery provision at the school has ensured that children enter their Reception Year with skills that are in line with those typical for their age. Children who have not attended the Nursery class often have less developed skills and knowledge. Good teaching and high-quality support enable them to catch up quickly. This has been a key factor in the improvements to the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their time in the early years. Children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Relationships in the early years are excellent. Staff have a genuine commitment to ensuring that children are nurtured and supported to learn well.
- Children are engrossed in their learning because adults engage them well. Well-thought-out tasks match children's needs and they work well both independently and with an adult.
- Children in the early years exhibit excellent behaviour. They work well together and feel comfortable exploring the learning opportunities provided.
- All statutory welfare requirements are met and safeguarding is effective. Children's actions show that they feel secure to initiate their own learning and that they feel safe in the learning environment.
- Leaders' investment in the early years has ensured that the environment is stimulating and bustling with activities to promote learning around every corner. In response, children are curious and enquiring learners.
- Parents are positive about the early years provision for their children. This is because staff are approachable and responsive to parents' needs.

## School details

Unique reference number	119384
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10045169

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tom Cropper
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Kenny
Telephone number	01704 225332
Website	<a href="http://banksststephens.easyschoolwebsite.com/">http://banksststephens.easyschoolwebsite.com/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@bank-st-stephens.lancs.sch.uk">head@bank-st-stephens.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2014

## Information about this school

- The school has experienced significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection. Three new teachers were appointed in September 2017, including two newly qualified teachers, as well as three new teaching assistants. The new deputy headteacher took up post in January 2018.
- In January 2016 the school extended to include nursery provision for three-year-old children.
- Lancashire local authority's Monitoring and Intervention Team provide support to the school.
- The school is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support through pupil premium funding has risen slightly since the last inspection and is now above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils entering and leaving the school at other than the usual times

is higher than the national average.

- 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 key stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class, including joint observations with the headteacher.
- With leaders, inspectors examined a range of pupils' work in mathematics, writing and from across the curriculum.
- Inspectors listened to individual pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 read, and also heard others read in the course of lessons.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors made observations of pupils' behaviour during lessons, at lunchtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 19 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors took account of responses from 16 staff who completed the staff survey.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance including its areas for development.
- Inspectors looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation, considered how this related to daily practice and spoke with staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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