

# St Columba's Catholic Primary School

Tong Street, Dudley Hill, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD4 9PY

## Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders have not secured consistently good teaching across all year groups. As a result of this, pupils' progress is variable.
- The standards of attainment reached by pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science are too low by the end of key stage 1.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend and apply their mathematical skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders have not been effective in improving the pupils' outcomes across the curriculum. The teaching of the curriculum beyond English and mathematics lacks depth.
- Historically, governors have not held leaders to account for improving the performance of the school. More recently, governors have begun to challenge leaders with greater rigour.
- Middle leaders are new to their roles. As a result, their effect on improving teaching has been limited.
- Teachers' expectations and assessment practices are not consistent. As a consequence, pupils produce work of variable quality across all subjects.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently good. This means that pupils who are not on track with the school's phonics programme are not catching up quickly enough.
- Persistent absence for all pupils is above the national average. As a result, some pupils' progress is hindered by their regular absence.
- In the early years, the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Boys and disadvantaged children make insufficient progress.

### The school has the following strengths

- The executive headteacher has secured a stable and effective leadership team. Leaders' improvement strategies are having a positive effect on the quality of teaching.
- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium funding well. Consequently, pupils take part in a range of activities.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Child protection and safeguarding procedures are a strength of the school. Pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils show respect for adults and children alike. Instances of bullying are infrequent.
- The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is strong.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, so that it is consistently good, by ensuring that:
  - all teachers have the same high expectations so that all groups of pupils make good progress in their learning
  - there are more opportunities for pupils to practise their mathematical skills to enable them to reach higher standards in mathematics
  - phonics teaching is effective in enabling pupils to reach higher standards in reading and writing in key stage 1
  - the quality of teaching throughout the early years is consistent.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - further developing the skills and expertise of middle leaders to make the improvements needed
  - sharing more widely the strong practice which exists within the school to enable greater consistency in teaching, learning and assessment and improving outcomes for pupils
  - reviewing the curriculum coverage to ensure that the curriculum as a whole is broad and balanced
  - ensuring that pupils attend well
  - making sure that governors continue to hold leaders to account so that the overall performance of the school improves rapidly.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, the school has undergone considerable staffing turbulence. The executive headteacher has secured a stable and effective leadership team. New leaders know what good-quality teaching looks like and recent strategies are starting to have a positive effect on helping individual teachers to improve their practice. However, leadership and management require improvement because there are still inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. As a result of this, pupils' progress is not consistently strong.
- Leaders have identified the main priorities to improve the school. However, some aspects of the leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness are overgenerous.
- There has been a concerted effort to improve pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders' actions are starting to have a positive effect, particularly in respect of pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 2. Although the school offers a broad curriculum, the quality of pupils' work in some subjects is variable.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic, keen to develop their skills and committed to raising pupils' attainment. Some leaders have only had their area of responsibility for a short time but they have already shown some positive effect in addressing immediate priorities. However, their impact needs to be sustained to provide better support to complement the work of senior leaders.
- Leaders have ensured that there is no inadequate teaching in the school. Leaders' actions have had a positive effect and there is now some evidence of stronger teaching. However, due to the remaining inconsistencies, pupils currently are not making consistently strong progress.
- Senior leaders have effectively supported the special educational needs coordinator in her role. She has developed systems to ensure the accurate identification of pupils' needs. As a result, a range of support is now in place and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making better progress. However, over time, these pupils have not made consistently strong progress in writing.
- The school's work to foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils have an understanding and appreciation of other cultures. Through religious education lessons, pupils develop an understanding of a range of faiths. Leaders develop British values effectively. Due to this, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders focus the spending of pupil premium funding on improving disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. This funding is also used to enable disadvantaged pupils to attend intervention groups to address their individual needs. As a result, by the end of key stage 2 for the last three years, disadvantaged pupils have made at least average progress in reading and writing and well-above-average progress in mathematics. In addition, leaders now use the funding more effectively to ensure better attendance for disadvantaged pupils.
- Specific funds for PE and sport are used well. Pupils have the opportunity to take part

in a range of extra-curricular activities and other sporting competitions. As a result, pupils have developed their teamworking skills and have real pride when representing their school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors take their safeguarding duties very seriously. The named safeguarding governor is involved in evaluating the leadership's checks on the effectiveness of the school's records and systems in relation to safeguarding.
- Governors recognise that, previously, they did not hold leaders to account sufficiently well. More recently, following external support, governors have begun to challenge leaders more effectively by asking detailed questions about the impact of their work. Governors are regular visitors to the school and, as observers, accompany leaders carrying out a range of monitoring activities. Governors are clear about many of the aspects of the school that need to be improved and how the leaders are addressing these. Governors are working with increasing effectiveness to ensure that the school improves.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. The staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training which ensures that they are knowledgeable about how to keep children safe from harm. Staff keep their knowledge up to date via weekly staff briefings. Where referrals to designated safeguarding staff are necessary, adults take immediate action. The records they keep in relation to these are well maintained.
- Leaders work effectively with outside agencies and professional services to provide support to pupils and families. Leaders are tenacious and take swift action to support pupils and keep them safe.
- Strong relationships exist between staff and pupils. Pupils who talked to the inspectors said they feel safe and that there are trusted adults they can talk to.
- Staff work effectively with pupils who have a range of complex social and emotional needs. For example, there are specialist staff who are well trained and very effective when supporting pupils who have particular emotional needs which affect their learning and behaviour.
- When making appointments, leaders carry out all necessary checks to ensure the suitability of staff working with pupils. Records are detailed and well maintained. As a result, any potential risks to staff and pupils are minimised.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching remains too variable across the school and within each key stage. Leaders have the skills and ability to develop and improve the quality of teaching. They ensure that less-experienced teachers are receiving support from more-experienced colleagues. Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving.

- Where teaching is most effective, pupils engage and focus on their learning. Where teaching is less effective, teachers' knowledge of the subject is weaker. As a result, the pupils make less progress over time.
- The quality of the teaching of writing is inconsistent across classes and key stages. Where pupils' learning is stronger, they have the opportunity to practise writing at length and in a variety of styles. However, scrutiny of pupils' work shows that the newly introduced approach to sequencing pupils' learning in English is not being used effectively in every year group.
- There is variability in the quality of teaching of phonics. Where pupils' learning of phonics is strong, teachers show good subject knowledge, use specific and accurate terminology and the pupils enjoy learning. Where teachers have a lack of subject expertise, pupils' learning in reading and writing is less secure.
- The teaching of mathematics in key stage 2 is a strength of the school. In mathematics lessons, teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate secure subject knowledge. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to solve mathematical problems using the skills they have learned. However, there are missed opportunities for the pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Since the last inspection, leaders have changed the way the school develops pupils' reading skills. This new approach is having a positive effect on pupils' attainment.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' attainment and the quality and presentation of pupils' work are not consistent. Because of this, pupils' progress, presentation and standard of work are variable. There are many examples of well-presented work in the pupils' extended writing books but this quality is not mirrored in some of the other curriculum areas.
- Teachers establish positive working relationships with pupils. Pupils talk positively about how their teachers help them.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils who talked to the inspectors said they feel safe and there are trusted adults they can talk to. Staff have introduced systems so pupils can indicate to adults whether they need emotional support. As a result of this, pupils feel confident to talk about their feelings and emotions.
- Pupils understand the importance of exercise and keeping healthy. They are involved in a wide range of activities and clubs.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and the police have talked to the pupils about this. As a result, pupils understand the risks of the internet and how to avoid these.
- Pupils say there is little bullying and understand the different types that exist. They are confident that staff do not tolerate bullying and will sort out any issues very quickly.

- Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the leadership roles and responsibilities the school offers them. As a result of these opportunities, pupils feel they are able to contribute to the school's development.
- Parents, carers and staff are confident that pupils are safe in school and well cared for.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because there are a significant proportion of pupils who do not attend school regularly. This affects their rates of progress. Since the last inspection, pupils' persistent absence has remained above the national average.
- Over time, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils has been well below the national average.
- School leaders are working tenaciously to support pupils who do not attend school as often as they should. Leaders have effective systems in place to check on those pupils who are absent. The strategies introduced are starting to improve pupils' attendance. As a result, disadvantaged pupils attend more regularly.
- Leaders have a positive effect on pupils' behaviour. They support staff to implement the recently developed behaviour policy. The school is a calm and welcoming place where pupils conduct themselves well.
- Staff have a high level of expertise in supporting vulnerable pupils. This helps these pupils to manage their own behaviour more effectively. As a result, the rate of fixed-term exclusions is well below the national average for similar schools.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Requires improvement

- Over time, the proportion of pupils reaching and exceeding the expected standards in writing at the end of key stages 1 and 2 is below average. Leaders' actions are addressing the quality of the teaching of writing. Pupils' current work reflects this, although standards are variable due to remaining inconsistencies in teaching.
- For the last three years, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard at the end of key stage 1 was also below the national average in reading, mathematics and science.
- Inspectors checked current pupils' work in a range of subjects. Pupils' progress is not consistently strong across the school. This is because teachers' expectations are not consistently high and the quality of teaching is variable.
- The teaching of phonics is not yet effective in all relevant year groups. In 2018, there was a decline in the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Results were below the national average, particularly for boys and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils who are not on track with the school's phonics programme are not receiving the support they need to help them catch up quickly enough.
- As a result of stronger mathematics teaching, attainment for Year 6 pupils in mathematics has improved and is now broadly in line with the national average at the

expected standard. For the last three years, by the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress was above average in mathematics.

- In reading, because of changes to the way the subject is taught at key stage 2, the proportions of pupils who reach the expected and higher standards in reading have increased. By the end of key stage 2, pupils' reading progress has been at least broadly average over time.
- Disadvantaged pupils now benefit from additional support which helps them make stronger progress. However, due to the variability in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time, disadvantaged pupils are not always able to catch up with others nationally.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress in mathematics and reading. Their needs are accurately identified but their progress in writing is still variable as a result of inconsistencies in teaching and learning.
- Staff work effectively to meet the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language. As a consequence, these pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Staffing within the early years has undergone considerable turbulence. There has been instability in leadership. As a result, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Nursery compared to that which is now more consistently strong in Reception. Although only having started very recently, the current leader, who is covering this position temporarily, is having a positive effect on teaching, learning and assessment, including the teaching of phonics.
- In the early years, safeguarding is effective and legal welfare requirements are met.
- Children start in the early years with skills that are below those typical for their age. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development has remained static over the last three years and is below the national average. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment mean that children do not catch up quickly enough.
- Over the last three years, there have been wide gaps in achievement between different groups of children. The proportion of boys who reach a good level of development is below the national average. Gaps exist between the achievements of disadvantaged children and other children nationally.
- Children in Reception are currently making good progress from their starting points at the beginning of the year. This is a result of recent improvements in teaching.
- Currently, the teaching of phonics in Reception is good and teachers' subject knowledge is strong. As a result, children progress well.
- Children interact well together and treat each other with respect. There are opportunities for children to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, during the inspection, children were found to be fascinated when examining objects linked to the Chinese New Year.



## School details

Unique reference number	107326
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10059035

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Holdsworth
Executive Headteacher	Catherine Markham
Telephone number	01274 681 961
Website	<a href="http://www.stcolumbas.bradford.sch.uk/">www.stcolumbas.bradford.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@stcolumbas.bradford.sch.uk">admin@stcolumbas.bradford.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	15–16 November 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized Roman Catholic primary school.
- The school is led and managed by an executive headteacher who took up post in December 2016. There have been considerable changes in the teaching staff since the previous inspection. A head of school was appointed in September 2018.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in December 2015.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND receiving support is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND who have an education, health and care plan is slightly below average.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons in all year groups. A number of lesson visits were carried out jointly with the executive headteacher and head of school.
- Discussions took place with senior and middle leaders, staff, governors and representatives from the local authority and the local diocese.
- Inspectors, together with subject leaders, scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at pupils' books during lesson visits.
- An inspector listened to pupils from Years 2, 3 and 6 read.
- Inspectors sought pupils' opinions, both formally and informally, during lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised by inspectors, including: the school's self-evaluation; improvement plans; governing body minutes; the school's own records of the monitoring of teaching and learning; behaviour, attendance and safeguarding records; and information on current pupils' attainment and progress.
- Inspectors took into account the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including the eight free-text comments. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day to gather their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Andy Taylor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kirsty Godfrey	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fiona McNally	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

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