

St Columba's Catholic Primary School

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

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The work of leaders and governors has not been good enough to sustain the good quality noted at the previous inspection.
- The school's actions to improve achievement have not been rigorously enough applied to ensure that all groups of pupils make rapid progress to close the gaps in their learning.
- Attainment is below average across the school and pupils do not make enough progress in Key Stage 2.
- Not enough is expected of the most able pupils in lessons, and activities in class do not always get the best out of them.
- There is not enough consistently good or better teaching to ensure that all pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, too few pupils make really strong progress.
- Teachers' written marking is not leading to rapid improvements in pupils' work. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve or given enough time to act upon any advice given.
- Pupils' handwriting is poor and most are not using joined up writing by the end of Year 6.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- The deputy headteacher is very effective in her role and has supported middle leaders through a period of significant change in staff. They are now working well together to continue the recent improvements in teaching and learning.
- Leadership, management and provision in the early years are good and lead to children making good progress from often very low starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making good progress and attaining standards very close to non-disadvantaged pupils, both in school and nationally.
- Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. They are courteous and helpful and learn to have a good sense of tolerance. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is provided for well.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. The inspectors also spoke to an external consultant who works closely with the school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's improvement plan; the school's data relating to pupils' progress; the work in pupils' books and the school's documentation including information on safeguarding.
- Pupils were observed during the breakfast club, assembly, lunchtimes and break times.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in many lessons. They also made additional visits to observe parts of lessons. They listened to some pupils read in Year 1 and Year 5.
- Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Inspectors also observed the headteacher and deputy headteacher reporting back to teachers on their findings.
- There were too few responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for them to be available for consideration. However, inspectors spoke informally to parents to gather their views about the school and also considered the school's 99 responses from the most recent annual parent view survey.
- Thirty-eight staff completed questionnaires and the responses were analysed.

Inspection team

Gillian Hunter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Melvyn Hemmings

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a much larger than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support children who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- One third of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and one fifth of pupils speak English as an additional language both of which proportions are above the national average.
- There is a thirty-eight place Nursery that offers part time provision either mornings or afternoons for children from the age of three. Recently, additional provision, managed by the governing body, has been added for children to attend part-time from the age of two years.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school offers a breakfast club and after-school services, both of which are managed by the governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been many significant changes of teaching staff, leaders and governors. The headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement so that it is at least good by:
 - all teachers setting high expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, especially for the most able pupils
 - making learning challenging for all pupils so that their progress is more rapid
 - improving pupils' handwriting throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good by:
 - ensuring that teachers' written marking of pupils' work leads to improvements
 - making sure the activities teachers provide for pupils in class are at just the right level of difficulty to promote the best possible progress for all pupils, including the most able.
- Increase the rigour and impact of leaders at all levels on pupils' attainment and progress, by:
 - ensuring the targets for pupils' progress in the school's plan for the future and in teachers' performance targets are high enough to ensure pupils are helped to make at least good progress
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching is clearly focused on the impact it has on pupils' learning and progress over time.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- School leaders and managers have not ensured the school's overall effectiveness has been maintained since the previous inspection. As a result, standards fell in 2013 and have not improved enough in 2014.
- The headteacher is well supported by the skilful deputy headteacher and the recently extended senior leadership team. Staff and governors have a clear view of what they want to achieve for pupils and know what they need to do to improve the school. The school's plans for improving achievement have not been implemented quickly enough to ensure that all groups of pupils make rapid progress.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, are developing their role in raising pupils' achievement in their areas of responsibility. They have not had enough time nor opportunity to fully impact on sustained improvement.
- The school's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are improving. School leaders, including governors, have taken decisive action to provide additional staff, training and support to staff on how they can be more effective and improve the quality of their teaching. This is why standards are now beginning to rise this year especially in Year 2 and Year 6.
- Leaders and managers hold teachers to account by setting them targets linked to improving the standards attained by pupils. Their effectiveness is regularly assessed through checks on their performance. However, there is too little focus on the impact that teaching has on pupils' attainment and progress over time. As a result, pupils are not making enough progress and teaching requires improvement overall.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to enhance the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Gaps in their attainment compared with other pupils in the school and nationally have narrowed rapidly. Their achievement is analysed and the school's actions focus on boosting the learning of individual pupils.
- School leaders have worked closely with the governing body to arrange the provision of the support of an independent consultant, to provide training and guidance for all leaders.
- The school is working closely with other schools in the local authority Catholic Partnership to establish new assessment procedures following the removal of National Curriculum levels. These are still to be fully implemented and it is too soon to measure their impact.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the different subjects that are taught. Pupils develop a good appreciation of different faiths and beliefs and gain a good understanding of the life and values of modern British society. This makes a positive contribution and ensures good relationships and equal opportunities are fostered between all pupils.
- Effective use is made of the primary school physical education (PE) and sports funding. The school is building on an already established programme of specialist PE by further developing the skills of all staff, and widening opportunities for pupils to participate in different sports and team games. This makes a good contribution to pupils' health and well-being.
- Leaders are effective in ensuring pupils attend school, behave well and are safe. They have brought about improvement by working more closely with parents. As a result, pupils' attendance is now in line with the national average. Safeguarding procedures are implemented well and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has worked with an independent consultant to review all aspects of its work and areas for further improvement. The governing body is making increasingly good use of data to improve its effectiveness in measuring rates of school improvement and challenging school leaders. Governors know where the best teaching is. Governors play a full role in making decisions as to whether teachers and other staff should be rewarded with salary increases and in reviewing targets for the headteacher. Governors take advantage of a range of training opportunities to improve their effectiveness. They ensure the school is a safe environment for all. They regularly monitor the effectiveness of the budget through the staffing and finance committee, including the use of pupil premium and primary school sport funding. Governors have been aware of the gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others. They ensured that pupil premium funding has been used wisely to rapidly close these gaps. These decisions have promoted equality of opportunity across the school and as a result, the gap between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils has been closing, especially since 2013. Statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are keen to come to school, are punctual and well prepared for learning. They are keen to start work in lessons and concentrate effectively. They are well behaved in lessons because teachers make expectations clear. They behave well at all times and move around the school sensibly.
- Attendance has improved over the last few years and is now average.
- Pupils are smartly dressed in their school uniform and are proud of their school. They are courteous towards each other, staff and visitors and enjoy talking about their learning.
- The school's records show that instances of poor behaviour are rare. This is because pupils understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour on their learning. There has only been one fixed-term exclusion in the past four years.
- The school works well with pupils who sometimes find it difficult to manage their own emotions and social skills. There are opportunities for pupils to look after the school's well organised garden and peace area.
- Pupils take responsibility eagerly and support others. They are very actively involved in a wide range of fundraising activities and are proud of their role on the school council.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they always feel safe and cared for well. This is because of the school's good systems for care and support and the consistency with which behaviour is managed.
- Pupils understand that their behaviour affects others and know that they should be kind and considerate. They comment that little bullying takes place and any incidents are successfully managed by the staff. The large majority of parents agree with their children's positive views.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because the impact on pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is not yet consistently good in all classes and for all groups of pupils.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is effective. Pupils use good phonics skills in their reading and writing. School leaders know the reasons why there was a dip in 2014 in the Year 1 phonics screening check and have ensured that pupils have quickly caught up in Year 2. Plans are in place to ensure that this dip is reversed and does not recur.
- Pupils' reading skills are being further developed through the opportunities they have to read regularly throughout the day. Pupil premium funding is used well to provide regular and specialist reading support for disadvantaged pupils when required.
- There is some very good teaching of writing, which is beginning to improve standards, when activities are exciting and engage pupils well. Pupils are clear about the skills they need to develop, and are encouraged to write regularly and at length in English and other subjects. However, pupils' progress in writing requires improvement overall because the good practice is not consistently applied in all classes and for all groups of pupils. Work is not always set with the right level of challenge for different groups of pupils and opportunities are missed to encourage the most able pupils to develop their ideas.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics requires improvement because too often work is not well planned to ensure that all groups of pupils are able to engage with tasks or that the most able pupils are engaged in challenging activities quickly enough. Actions to improve pupils' number and mental calculation skills have not yet had time to raise standards or pupils' rates of progress.
- The school's marking policy is used consistently to help pupils understand what they have done well. Teachers' marking is less clear in helping pupils understand exactly what they need to do to improve and they are not always offered sufficient time to act upon any advice given.
- Teachers' expectation of pupils' presentation of their work especially handwriting requires improvement. There is no clear school policy on handwriting and most pupils do not have opportunities to develop joined up writing at all during their time in school.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. They provide timely extra help and support for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This contributes well to the progress these pupils make.

The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- Most children enter the early years with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, they reach standards that are much closer to those expected for their age.
- Since the previous inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have remained below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Not enough pupils have made sufficient progress between Years 3 to 6.
- In 2014, pupils have made better progress by the end of Year 2 and standards reached by pupils are now just below the national average in reading and mathematics.
- Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was still below the national average. In mathematics, attainment fell to well below average. Most pupils are now making better progress in mathematics but their attainment is only rising slowly. This is because the school has yet to fully engage and motivate pupils to apply their skills to practical activities such as problem solving in mathematics lessons and other subjects.
- Most pupils' attainment in writing has improved. The proportion of Year 6 pupils that attained the expected standard for their age in 2014 was the same as the national average in writing, which was an improvement.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity across the school is improving. For example, since 2013, the gap between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others has been closing. This is because teachers have more rigorously monitored the progress of all groups of pupils to identify any groups or individuals who may be falling behind.
- The most able pupils do not consistently reach the standards of which they are capable. The work they are given does not always ensure they make full use of their skills and deepen their learning, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Pupil premium funding is effectively used to provide additional reading, writing and mathematics activities which are sharply focused on accelerating pupils' learning. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress and their attainment is now very close to other pupils in the school and nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2013, disadvantaged pupils were approximately two terms behind other pupils in the school and all other pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and usually reach standards in line with the national average.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress at least similar to other pupils in the school. They make better progress in developing their reading skills throughout the school reaching standards above those of other pupils.

The early years provision **is good**

- The early years is well led and managed with a strong team approach by staff who quickly get to know the children and build activities around their interests. As a result, all children are well prepared for learning in Key Stage 1 and this was the view shared by parents who spoke with the inspector. This effective leadership and management continues seamlessly in the current absence of the permanent post holder.
- Most children start school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, particularly in the areas of reading, writing, communication, language and emotional development.
- Throughout the Nursery and Reception classes the good teaching, care and support help to ensure children make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills much closer to those expected for their age.
- Children's speaking, listening and communication skills develop well. Teachers and other adults are imaginative and consistent in their approach and ensure that children's interest is maintained.
- Children in the early years behave well and are kept safe. Classrooms and outdoor areas are organised well and activities and resources carefully match children's interests. There is a consistent approach to making clear to children what they are going to learn and children know what is expected of them. As a result, they arrive at their activities eager to learn and settle quickly to work. Staff assess carefully the progress being made to inform the planning of activities to challenge children.
- The recently established provision for two -year-olds provides good quality learning. This ensures that children develop at a good rate and prepares them well for entry into Nursery at age three.

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	107326
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	448349

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	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Burton
Headteacher	Peter Spillane
Date of previous school inspection	13 July 2010
Telephone number	01274 681961
Fax number	01274 688880
Email address	admin@stcolumbas.bradford.sch.uk

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