

Holy Family Catholic Primary School Platt Bridge

Wigan Street, Platt Bridge, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 5JF

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leaders have failed to make the improvements required following the last inspection. They lack ambition for the pupils and do not recognise the school's deficiencies. Plans for improvement are therefore not fit for purpose.
- The headteacher is not providing clear direction for the school.
- The governors have too little understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the governing body has not held the headteacher to account for the decline in standards.
- Standards have declined over several years in different subjects. The school is currently only focusing on improving writing.
- Pupils of all abilities are making too little progress. Most-able pupils are not stretched enough and boys are not performing as well as girls in the school or other boys nationally.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour in lessons poorly and time for learning is wasted.
- A very high turnover of staff has meant there has been little stability in pupils' learning. Leaders have given teachers too little support and too few training opportunities to help them work with age groups that are new to them. The quality of teaching is inadequate.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are not identified early enough and not provided with sufficient support.
- Provision in the Nursey and Reception classes is inadequate because resources are limited and the quality of teaching is weak.
- Too many pupils say that they do not feel safe in the school and that they are subjected to bullying, which is not dealt with effectively.
- Security measures are not applied consistently.
- The records of the suitability of adults to work with children are incomplete.

The school has the following strengths

- The leadership of the recently revised curriculum shows promise.
- Provision for two-year-olds is well thought through and managed effectively.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the leadership and management of the school by ensuring that:
 - leaders have the highest ambitions for pupils of all levels of ability
 - leaders develop the skills to draw up and implement detailed plans that will ensure that standards throughout the school rise rapidly and that the progress made by all pupils is at least in line with national averages
 - all members of the governing body have the training and skills to be able to analyse the school's performance accurately and hold the headteacher and staff regularly and rigorously to account for improving standards for pupils of all abilities across the school
 - the pupil premium and sports funding is used effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all classes are taught by high-quality, permanent members of staff who will provide continuity and stability to pupils' learning
 - all staff receive regular and high-quality training that enables them to fulfil their roles effectively
 - demanding targets are set for each class and each group of pupils in every area of the curriculum and that progress towards those targets is checked regularly
 - pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified as soon as they arrive at the school, so that they can receive the support they need
 - all staff are trained to manage pupils' behaviour effectively.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - all staff and leaders are properly trained for their roles and receive the support they need to do their work effectively
 - resources are of high quality and that the indoor and outdoor areas are radically improved so that they stimulate learning for young children.
- Ensure that all pupils are safe and feel safe in school, by:
 - developing rigorous strategies to eliminate bullying and ensuring that these are implemented, and their impact monitored, regularly and frequently
 - ensuring that all checks of adults' suitability to work with children are kept up to date

- ensuring that security policies are applied consistently.

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

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Senior leaders and governors have failed to bring about the improvements required following the last inspection. Consequently, all aspects of the school have declined from being good to now being inadequate. Pupils are not making the progress they should and are not reaching the standards of which they are capable. They are not being prepared adequately for the next stage of their education and their future life chances are being restricted. The headteacher is not providing clear direction in tackling these deficiencies.
- The school's self-evaluation gives a highly inaccurate and far too optimistic a view of the school. It recognises the underperformance in 2016 but treats that as being an isolated event, rather than further evidence of the downward slide that has been happening for the last four years. It makes little or no reference to the lack of progress made by pupils of different abilities and presents no analysis of the factors contributing to this. The school's development plan fails to focus on the areas that require urgent improvement. Even where priorities have been established, they lack precision in terms of how much improvement is to be made and over what period of time. The plan gives no indication of how success will be measured. It is not clear when, how, by whom and how often progress towards the stated goals will be checked.
- Senior leaders show a lamentable lack of ambition for the pupils. The improvement targets set for pupils and teachers focus only on ensuring that every class reaches the government's minimum acceptable targets in writing. No account has been taken of the fact that some classes are performing better than others and therefore could be expected to go beyond that target. No account has been taken of the need to set different targets for different groups of pupils to ensure that they are all challenged appropriately. No whole-school targets have been set for reading and mathematics.
- For a variety of reasons, the school has experienced a considerable number of staff absences and changes over the last two years. The children in the early years, for example, have been taught by six different teachers in one year and some teachers have had to move swiftly from one year group to another, without proper preparation and training for their new roles. Although the situation has improved this term, the instability is not entirely resolved because several teachers are still undertaking temporary roles. The reasons for the staff changes have often been beyond the control of the school. Nevertheless, the disruption to pupils' experiences would have been less if the school's contingency plans had been better developed.
- The small sample of parents with whom the lead inspector spoke during the inspection were, in most cases, positive about the school. However, the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents were far more critical. Over half of those parents who expressed a view said that the school does not respond well to the concerns raised by parents. Almost half said that the school is not well led and managed, that pupils are not making progress and that they would not recommend the school to others.
- The school does not have effective systems for the early identification of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is because the school's policy is

out of date and does not place sufficient emphasis on this aspect of provision. It also reflects a lack of understanding of the relevant processes on the part of staff, a problem exacerbated by frequent changes of personnel. As a result, the number of children recorded as having special educational needs and/or disabilities in the last 18 months has been much smaller than might be expected, suggesting that pupils are not receiving the support that they need.

- The school's curriculum has very recently been revised. Staff have had some helpful guidance on how to plan and sequence topics so that they cover the requirements of the national curriculum and ensure continuity and development in the knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to specific subjects. The indications are that, under the enthusiastic guidance of the curriculum leader, a good start is being made on its implementation.
- Extra-curricular provision is limited. Of the pupils who responded to the online questionnaire, fewer than half said that they regularly take part in clubs and activities outside the classroom.
- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

Governance of the school

- There have been considerable changes in the governing body since the last inspection. At the time of the inspection there was an acting chair of governors and there were four vacancies, several of which were long standing. Some, but not all, of these were the result of illness.
- Not all the governors have undergone the required checks with the Disclosure and Barring Service to ensure their suitability to work with children.
- The governors have been supportive of the headteacher but have failed to provide the challenge necessary to stop the decline in the school's performance. They have not conducted a sufficiently rigorous and objective analysis of the school's performance data and other information on the school. As a result, their view of it is far too optimistic and they lack any clarity about how the considerable number of weaknesses in the school will be tackled.
- The school's policy for supporting disadvantaged pupils through the pupil premium does not fulfil requirements. The plan for the current year includes no more than a list of the areas on which money will be spent. The evaluation of the previous year's spending includes no success criteria against which its impact can be assessed. Similarly, the policy for the use of the additional funding for primary physical education and sport lacks detail.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.
- Despite leaders' efforts to update it during the inspection, the single central record of checks on staff is incomplete and it does not, therefore, meet requirements.
- The systems to check on safety in and around the school are not implemented

consistently. Parents park their cars hazardously on the 'keep clear' areas on the road outside the school without being challenged by senior leaders, even when they see it happening. Parents should be accompanied when inside the school building, but this policy is not applied consistently and adults can wander around the school on their own. There is, therefore, a risk to pupils' safety.

- In interviews with inspectors and in their responses to the online questionnaire, a considerable number of pupils said that they had been bullied and did not feel safe in the school. Parents also expressed concerns about bullying and how it is tackled.
- The school's policy on safeguarding is up to date and covers all the required areas. It also has a section on e-safety. Training sessions have been provided on this for parents but they have been very poorly attended.
- Staff have received up-to-date training on the safeguarding policy and, when questioned by the inspectors, demonstrated that they knew what to do when they had concerns about safeguarding.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Teachers do not focus sufficiently on the needs of different groups of pupils and on ensuring that pupils make strong progress from their individual starting points. As a result, too many pupils are not reaching the standards of which they are capable and are not being prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- The school's support for least-able pupils is better thought through than that for the most able. Least-able pupils receive a considerable amount of appropriate additional help from teaching assistants and the activities for them are adapted so that they can, for example, use physical resources to help them grasp an idea. In the case of most-able pupils, however, the tasks set do not ensure that the pupils are challenged to think more deeply so they can reach the higher standards of which they are capable. This is the case across the curriculum.
- When checking on pupils' understanding, teachers tend to rely heavily on responses volunteered by the same small group of pupils and they give too little attention to checking on the understanding of those pupils who are less forthcoming. They make limited use of supplementary questions to help pupils develop their ideas, to help them identify errors or misconceptions or to help them correct themselves.
- Teachers pay far too little attention to correcting the many errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling that mar the work of pupils of all abilities. As a result, standards in these areas continue to be far too low.
- Teachers do not have consistent strategies for ensuring that pupils stay on task and concentrate during lessons. Pupils are not encouraged to apply the rules of behaviour for themselves. Teachers have to keep reminding them about what is expected of them, with the result that time for learning is wasted.
- The school assesses pupils' attainment each half term so that teachers know how much progress pupils are making. The focus is on whether they are reaching the level expected for their age. Whether or not pupils are reaching higher or deeper levels of understanding is not assessed. This means there is no reliable way of gauging whether

the most able pupils are making enough progress and are being stretched sufficiently.

- Currently, each year group has been set the same target: that at least 65% of pupils should reach the level expected for their age in writing. No targets have been set for reaching higher levels and no targets of any sort have been set for reading and mathematics. Specific targets have not been set to raise the performance of boys and girls, disadvantaged pupils or pupils of low, middle and high ability. This is despite the great discrepancies between the performance of these groups when compared with their counterparts nationally, which are disturbing aspects of the school. Although pupils' work is assessed to determine pupils' progress, the process takes place in a vacuum, with no means of knowing whether any of the groups noted make sufficient progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is inadequate.
- Of the random sample of pupils who spoke to the lead inspector, most said that they felt safe at school and when travelling to and from school. However, most of them said that they had been bullied at one time or another. Of those who had been bullied, only a minority felt that the problem had been resolved. Most said that pupils often made fun of each other and called each other names. These included racist taunts. Other pupils who spoke to an inspector also referred to bullying. They said that they did not always feel safe at lunchtimes and that there were some areas of the school grounds that were unsafe.
- These views reflected the responses to the online questionnaire for pupils. Almost half said that bullying happens at the school. A third said that, when it does happen, it is not dealt with effectively. Not all the pupils felt safe at the school, citing name-calling, and being hit and kicked as reasons for this.
- Parents also expressed similar concerns. Of those who responded to the online questionnaire, over a third felt that pupils were not safe at the school and between a third and a half felt that bullying is not dealt with effectively.
- Pupils' spiritual development occurs mainly through the school's work with the local church. In addition, pupils learn about other faiths, including Judaism, Buddhism and Islam. They have opportunities to contribute to the leadership of the school through membership of the school council, to which they are elected, and the 'peace police' for which they are selected by staff. The members of the 'peace police' are trained to resolve conflict between their peers but some pupils are reluctant to go to them when they are being bullied. Pupils have opportunities to talk with visitors from a range of occupations, such as the world of professional rugby, in order to raise their aspirations. They also take part in visits, such as the recent visit to the local war memorial or to a steam railway, as part of their work in history.
- The displays around the school pay limited attention to celebrating a range of cultures or to challenging stereotypes, for example by showing men and women in non-

traditional roles.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Although pupils generally move around the school in an orderly fashion and are polite to each other, their behaviour in lessons is not good enough. Too often, pupils have to be reminded repeatedly not to shout out, tap their pencils or to chat to each other. This takes time away from teaching and learning. Even when they are quiet, pupils do not always concentrate but let their minds wander away from what is being discussed. Some pupils say that this is because the teachers' explanations are too long and, 'we get bored'. In question and answer sessions, only a few pupils take an active part and in group activities, some pupils let others do the thinking for them and are content to copy their classmates' answers. Pupils show little thirst for knowledge.
- Following the last inspection, there was a rise in the number of pupils absent from school. In 2014, absence rates were above the national average. In 2015, they were in the worst 10% nationally and were particularly high for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In 2016, absence was still higher than the national average. There has been an improvement this term, but attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still low. The school has not conducted any analysis of the relationship between pupils' attendance and the progress that they make.
- Under the leadership of the deputy headteacher, the school has recently put a specific focus on improving behaviour and attendance. This includes organising behaviour games to encourage pupils to take responsibility for regulating their own behaviour. The impact of this work is not yet being reflected by pupils' behaviour in lessons.
- The school's lateness policy has recently been revised. However, there is a lack of consistency in the way that this policy is interpreted by members of the senior leadership team.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Standards at the school have declined since the last inspection, especially over the last two years.
- In 2015, the proportion of 11-year-olds who reached the expected level for their age was in line with the national average in mathematics but below average in reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling. The proportions who reached the higher standards in mathematics and reading were below average, showing that the most able pupils were not achieving highly enough. In 2016, standards declined further with the proportions reaching the expected level being below average in all subjects. In writing, the proportion was a third of the national figure. In mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling, the proportions reaching the higher levels were below average; again the most able pupils underperformed.
- The progress made by pupils between the ages of seven and 11 was significantly

below the national averages in 2015, particularly in the case of middle-ability pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. In 2016, the progress made by middle-ability pupils in reading and mathematics was in the lowest 10% nationally. In writing, progress was in the lowest 10% nationally for every level of ability.

- The results for seven-year-olds have fluctuated over the last four years. In 2015 and 2016, they were broadly in line with national averages. However, in 2016, middle-ability pupils did far less well than they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In contrast to this downward trend, results in the phonics screening check have improved consistently for the last three years. In 2016, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected level was above the national figure.
- The school's own analysis of the progress of its current pupils shows that there has been some improvement since September but this has not been consistent. In key stage 1, boys continue to make less good progress than girls. In key stage 2, boys' progress is improving in some classes but, in the same classes, girls' progress is declining. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils varies across classes.
- The school's current analysis focuses only on the progress pupils make towards the levels expected of their ages. It has no information on how many pupils are likely to reach higher standards.
- The work in pupils' books shows that they make slower progress in writing than they should. Some of the most able pupils in key stage 1 find it difficult to produce joined-up handwriting, for example, because of the way they have been taught letter formation. As a result, they have reverted to using print.
- Beyond their regular English lessons, pupils have opportunities to write in subjects such as history, science and geography. However, the progress of pupils of all abilities is being hampered by weaknesses in spelling, grammar and punctuation which are not being systematically challenged by the teachers. The most able pupils do not check the spelling of words and they are not being encouraged to extend their vocabulary. Although the school has made writing its only clear priority, improvement in this area is still limited.
- In other subjects, the most able pupils are not always challenged to think further about the topic they are researching and to extend, revise and improve their work.
- In mathematics, least-able pupils are, in general, given helpful additional support to understand the work. Most-able pupils, however, are given too few opportunities to explore ideas in greater depth. Opportunities for pupils to apply mathematics in a range of contexts are limited.
- All the pupils who were heard reading alone had reading records which showed that they read to an adult at least three times a week. They all said that they enjoy reading and read other books, as well as those that they are given by the school. The fluency of the reading of high-attaining and low-attaining pupils was limited by their lack of attention to punctuation. They tended to run one sentence into another and did not pause between paragraphs. This reflects the lack of attention to punctuation in teachers' marking of written work. When faced with unfamiliar words, least-able pupils had difficulty in sounding out the different parts of a word and putting them back

together again. Therefore, they lost the meaning of the sentences they were reading. Some most-able pupils also had difficulty in sounding out words. For example, they did not realise that 'ing', in a word such as 'singing', is one sound rather than three separate sounds.

Early years provision

Inadequate

- Insufficient support and training have been provided for the leadership of the early years.
- The leader has quickly established a system for assessing the children in their first three weeks in the setting. The staff are only now beginning to identify those children who need additional help, however. No work has been done to identify children who may have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders have had some difficulties in encouraging parents to support their children's learning but the situation is improving.
- The early years setting is very poorly resourced. There is hardly any focus on literacy and the areas of learning are not clearly defined. Children do not know what different activities are for and do not know what to do when they take part in them. Although the information on the children in the setting shows that there are weaknesses in their knowledge and understanding of the world, there is very little focus on these aspects of learning in the work that has been organised for them.
- The way that the teaching assistants are deployed does not ensure that children of different abilities are given the additional support they need to make good progress. The outdoor area is extremely cramped and pupils' opportunities to play with wheeled vehicles and to develop their physical skills are particularly restricted.
- Samples of work show that the children are using a phonics programme to develop their understanding of letters and sounds. They have very few opportunities to write, however.
- The early years staff have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training. The inconsistent application of the school's policy for entry into the building, however, means that there is a risk to the children's safety.
- On the basis of the information gathered to date, the proportion of children who will reach a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year will be below average for the fourth year running. The use of funding to support disadvantaged children is as limited in the early years as in the rest of the school.
- The provision for two-year-old children is in stark contrast to the above. The setting is well resourced, both indoors and outdoors. All areas of learning are clearly defined, with staff providing focused support for the children's learning. The school's leaders have not ensured that this good practice is shared across the early years setting.

School details

Unique reference number	106496
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10003046

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	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angharad Wheatley (acting)
Headteacher	Kathryn Mitty
Telephone number	01942 704148
Website	www.inceholyfamily.wigan.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@admin.inceholyfamily.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 May 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information on its website about governance, the pupil premium and sports funding.
- The school met the government's floor standards for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6 in 2015.
- This school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just above average.
- The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is just above average.

- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school at other than the usual times is low.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in classes, including joint observations with the headteacher. The inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and talked to them about their work.
- The lead inspector talked with parents as they brought their children to school. He also examined the responses to the online questionnaires for parents and further communication received from parents.
- The lead inspector met the acting chair of the governing body and a parent governor, and spoke to the leader of the local consortium of schools, the school improvement partner and a representative of the Liverpool Archdiocese.
- The lead inspector met with pupils chosen at random from Years 3, 5 and 6.
- The inspectors also spoke with pupils in lessons, in the corridors and the playground.
- The inspectors examined the responses of pupils to the online questionnaire.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the school's development plan and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- The inspectors also scrutinised documents relating to standards, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Aelwyn Pugh, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lis Burbage	Ofsted Inspector
Moira Atkins	Ofsted Inspector
Schelene Ferris	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.

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