

St Clare's Catholic Primary School

Fagley Road, Fagley, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD2 3JD

Inspection dates	16–17 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- A committed staff team aims to nurture all pupils to be the best they can be academically, socially and emotionally. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and are happy in school.
- Subject leaders are fully involved in driving whole school improvements. This has contributed positively to the improvements seen since the school was last inspected.
- The school provides a rich curriculum to inspire and motivate pupils. This is supplemented by a range of visit and visitors that widen pupils' experiences.
- Parents and carers are supportive of the school and feel their children are looked after, safe and happy.
- Leaders, including governors, have a shared ambition for raising standards and a clear view of what the school does well and what it needs to improve.
- Outcomes have improved year on year. From their individual starting points all pupils make good progress.
- Standards in mathematics are higher than those in reading and writing and are average by the time pupils leave the school.
- Pastoral support is highly effective. The learning mentor works tirelessly to ensure pupils and their wider families are well supported.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards at the end of key stage 2 remain lower than national averages in reading and writing.
- Pupils do not consistently apply spelling rules and patterns accurately.
- Systems for measuring progress are not precise enough, particularly for those pupils who may not reach the attainment expected for their age.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen outcomes for pupils, particularly in reading and writing, by ensuring that:
 - pupils are exposed to an increasing range of quality reading material and vocabulary in all subjects
 - pupils consistently apply spelling rules and patterns when writing by themselves
 - expectations for writing in all subjects are consistently high across the school
 - the school has appropriately accurate and precise systems for measuring the progress of pupils whose attainment may not be as expected for their age.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders, including governors, have effectively addressed the key areas for improvement since the last inspection. They know their school well and are aware of its strengths and what needs to be done to improve it further.
- The headteacher knows all of the pupils in her charge and places their well-being and success firmly at the heart of all decision making. She recognises that for some pupils school is a place of safety and calm and is committed to providing the very best experiences possible. She is very well supported by the highly effective deputy headteacher.
- Subject leaders are fully involved in driving whole-school improvement and have increased the leadership capacity of the school. They have received excellent training and support and are playing a vital role in improving the quality and consistency of teaching across the school. They are reflective about their work and have been given the responsibility and confidence to try new ways of working to better support pupil outcomes. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
- The performance of teachers is checked rigorously, with good practice rewarded and poor performance addressed immediately. Action has led to improvement across the school since the previous inspection. A significant factor in successful teacher development is the strengthening partnerships within the local triad of Catholic schools.
- Leaders' own evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and supported with appropriate evidence. Plans for improving the school are drawn from this and provide a detailed document against which success can be measured.
- Sports funding is used well. It has increased opportunities for pupils to experience different sports, such as skiing and golf. It has enabled the school to offer pupils an increasing number of after-school clubs, which are fully subscribed, and greater access to competition through the local sports partnership.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used wisely to close gaps in outcomes that exist when pupils first join the school. It has been used effectively to boost the attendance of this group of pupils, which has increased considerably since 2014.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and subjects are taught as topics. This provides a meaningful context for learning and helps pupils to make links between subjects. It is enhanced by a range of visits and visitors to inspire and engage pupils. The richness of pupils' wider experiences is captured within class workbooks, where one pupil reflected on the visit of a planetarium to the school: 'Wow! I stepped into the hall and saw a huge silver dome!'
- The school values permeate the work of the school and are used well to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also effectively support pupils to prepare for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are supportive of the school. Several parents sought out inspectors at the beginning of the school day to express their confidence and share their experiences of the school's work to support their children. One parent was keen to share, 'School knows my child well. I am happy with his learning and progress.'
- The local authority has confidence in the leadership of the school and has reduced the intensity of its support as the school's capacity to improve itself has increased.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have developed their expertise and understanding of the school. They are fully aware of the actions taken to improve teaching and the impact this has had.
 - They organise their work through an effective committee structure, where their skills are deployed effectively. Minutes of these meetings reflect the good level of support and challenge offered to leaders of the school.
 - Governors engage with staff, parents and pupils and take account of their views. For example, they recognise that for many families the local area provides limited opportunities for enrichment activities, so they place high priority on ensuring the school's curriculum supplements this.
 - Governors know the amount of additional funding the school receives for both disadvantaged pupils and for improving physical education and sport. They know precisely how it has been spent and the impact it has had.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Policies are thorough and procedures strictly adhered to by all staff. They are reviewed regularly to reflect changes in guidance and requirements. Any concerns are dealt with in a timely and appropriate manner. As a result, children are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers plan lessons that engage pupils to want to find things out. They are skilled at building pupils' confidence to try out new ideas and keep going when learning becomes difficult. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils felt a great sense of fulfilment to have successfully reached the end of a tricky task set to make them think and apply their reasoning about shapes. 'Phew, we have done it!'
- Teachers mark work consistently well across all classes and according to the school policy. This is helpful in enabling pupils to improve their work quickly.
- The teaching of mathematics has strengthened since the school was last inspected and is now securely good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they plan effectively for pupils' abilities. They give pupils increasing responsibility to choose activities from four options that become more challenging: mild, hot, spicy and fiery. Teachers encourage pupils to choose the correct level for their ability.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of mental arithmetic strategies that they apply to a variety of tasks. As a result, there has been a three-year improving trend in outcomes at both key stages 1 and 2, which are now in line with national averages.
- Basic reading skills are taught well, including phonics (letters and the sounds that they make). This has resulted in year-on-year improvement to outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check, which are now broadly in line with national averages.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and there are increasing opportunities for them to read with an adult in school. This is strengthening pupils' confidence to read aloud and express opinions. One pupil told inspectors, 'I like to read in the classroom...everywhere!' This view is commonplace in all classes.
- Teachers are using quality texts to underpin the teaching of English. Increasing exposure to a variety of traditional and modern texts has led to increased pupil confidence in both reading and writing and to improving outcomes in English lessons. This approach has not been extended sufficiently to other subjects.
- Handwriting is well taught in the early years and key stage 1, where joins are well formed and letters appropriately sized. It is less consistent at key stage 2, where poor handwriting habits are more difficult to change.
- The teaching of spelling is not yet consistent across the school. As a result, pupils do not apply common spelling patterns and rules accurately in the independent writing and standards by the end of Year 6 are not as high as they should be.
- Teachers include within their planning a focus on the most able pupils; they plan and set work which is at the right level. As a result, the progress that these pupils are making is good.
- Classrooms are generally calm and purposeful because of teachers' high expectations and clearly established routines for how pupils should behave. On the rare occasion this is not the case learning slows.
- Homework is appropriate and regular. Pupils and parents feel that it is just enough. Displays of holiday homework around the school celebrate pupils' writing.
- Teachers use assessment information generally well to shape lessons and plan for future learning. They keep meticulous records about some aspects of the achievement of individuals and groups of pupils. However, these are not precise enough to measure accurately the progress of those pupils who may not reach expected attainment for their age by the end of the year.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are courteous to visitors and have good manners. They take pride in their work and are keen to celebrate the success of others within the school.
- The learning mentor offers highly effective support to individuals and their families. Pupils show the utmost respect for her and have overwhelming trust and confidence in the work she does to support them.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe in school. As a result, playtimes are harmonious, with few incidents recorded.
- Bullying is rare. Pupils told inspectors that it never happens and should it occur are confident that it would be dealt with effectively and appropriately. Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes bullying and know the importance of keeping themselves safe online.

- The school council is actively involved in shaping school improvements. Members feel valued and listened to by school leaders, who are keen to accommodate their suggestions to develop the extensive school grounds and create further opportunities for outdoor learning. They have already successfully chosen markings for the playground to support whole-school exercise sessions.
- As a result of effective lessons and a detailed programme of assemblies, pupils know how to keep themselves healthy and are encouraged to make healthy food choices and take regular exercise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils in all classes have good attitudes to learning. Routines are well established and this makes school a calm and purposeful place to learn and develop.
- Staff apply the school's behaviour-management system consistently and effectively. Teachers use it well to address any behaviour that may result in pupils becoming distracted. As such, there are no serious incidents of poor behaviour recorded.
- Attendance remains below the national average, despite leaders' best efforts to improve it. The learning mentor works with identified families to improve overall attendance and this has led to a significant reduction in the proportion of pupils who miss considerable amounts of school.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils in English and mathematics have improved year on year. They are now broadly in line with national averages for mathematics, with standards in reading and writing slightly lower. From their individual starting points, progress for all groups of pupils is good.
- Every year group within the school differs greatly as regards the complex and varying needs of its pupils and the proportion of pupils who join or leave the school outside normal times. Leaders use a detailed system to track individuals which is intended to ensure they receive the most appropriate and timely support. However, procedures are not yet accurate enough to measure precisely the finer elements of progress, particularly for those pupils who are falling behind.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils within each year group varies greatly, as do their needs. As a result of careful tracking and effective interventions, disadvantaged pupils make accelerated progress from their individual starting points. Where attainment is lower than that of other pupils in the school, it has reduced by the time they leave the school. When this is not the case, it is because of significant and complex individual needs.
- Most-able pupils make good progress and are well supported throughout the school. Most are working at greater depth. They are encouraged to tackle complicated problems resiliently and are challenged to do more. They have mature attitudes to learning, as suggested by a group of pupils working within Year 4 mathematics who said, 'We use each other's ability to help us.'
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make at least good progress like their peers. Because teachers assess their needs early, they are swiftly able to give them an effective programme of support to fill any gaps in their learning.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often, but not all pupils receive support for this from home. When this is the case, pupils are heard to read in school and some benefit from small-group interventions.
- Much of pupils' writing is linked to the texts being studied, such as Michael Morpurgo's novel, 'Kensuke's kingdom', about the experiences of a boy on a desert island. Pupils are able to write at length in a wide range of styles. However, their writing in other subjects, such as science and geography, does not follow the same approach and is less well developed.
- The emphasis upon studying texts supports pupils' wider exposure to a range of books and authors. Pupils heard to read showed an enthusiasm for reading and great enjoyment. Careful selection of reading material ensures that all pupils, regardless of ability, feel successful and enjoy reading.

Early years provision

is good

- Historically, children have entered the Reception class with skills lower than that typically expected for their age and with boys' skills lower than that of girls. This year is an exception to previous years, where the majority of children have entered with skills closer to those expected.
- By the time they leave the Reception class, the proportion of children reaching a good level of

development has improved year on year, with further improvement seen this year and outcomes broadly in line with the national average. From children's starting points, this represents good progress and prepares them well for learning in Year 1.

- The improving outcomes are the result of the hard work and determination of the early years leader, who also takes on board the support and advice given from schools within the Catholic partnership of schools.
- Staff check pupils' progress carefully, to ensure all children make no less than expected progress. Where any underperformance or gaps in learning are identified, they provide timely support. For lower-ability children, in particular, this has led to accelerated progress.
- Staff plan the provision around a theme to provide children with a context for their learning and better to meet their needs and interests. It is designed to encourage children to talk about their learning and to offer increasing opportunities for them to write. For example, several boys were playing the mud garden. They confidently informed inspectors, 'We are writing about our plant...that's mine...it will grow into a beanstalk...like Jack and the Beanstalk.'
- The teaching of phonics is effective; children are able to use their knowledge to identify words. For example, one boy was digging in the mud garden and was able to identify the word 'dig' to explain to the inspector what he was doing.
- Funding provided to support disadvantaged children is used effectively. The proportion of disadvantaged children varies greatly each year, as do their needs. Additional adults ensure that children are able to work individually on their next steps in learning. As a result, disadvantaged children make good progress from their individual starting points.
- The most able children are very well supported and make good progress from their starting points. Teachers have an accurate understanding of the stage of learning that they are at and how to move them forwards. This ensures they make the same good progress as other children.
- Routines are well established, which means that children quickly settle to purposeful activity and behave well. As a result, children are happy and safe in the Reception class.
- Assessment information of children's next steps for learning are shared with parents through workshops, so they can help their children at home. The school uses an online tracking system to provide parents with easier access to this information. It is having a positive impact on children's outcomes.

School details

Unique reference number	107325
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10011956

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nicholas Kiwomya
Headteacher	Mary Newsham
Telephone number	01274 637841
Website	www.stclares.bradford.sch.uk
Email address	office@stclares.bradford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 February 2014

Information about this school

- St Clare’s Catholic Primary School has increased in size since it was last inspected, but remains smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium has remained the same since 2014 and is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of the Catholic Schools Partnership of Bradford and Keighley and works closely with a local triad of Catholic schools.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school outside normal times has been increasing since it was last inspected and is higher than that seen nationally.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed pupils' learning in 15 lessons and part lessons. Several of these were jointly observed with the school's senior leaders.
- In addition, the inspection team looked at examples of pupils' work in books and folders and listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, the headteacher and members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- The inspection team took account of 10 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, talked to parents directly and also considered the outcomes of the school's own parental survey. Inspectors also took into account staff and pupil survey results.
- The inspection team examined: the school's own information of pupils' recent and current progress; the school's evaluation of how well it is doing and its records of monitoring the quality of teaching; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Linda Clay

Ofsted Inspector

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