

St Nicholas of Tolentine Catholic Primary School

Pennywell Road, Bristol BS5 0TJ

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Over time, school leaders and governors have not taken swift action to improve teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, pupils' outcomes in all key stages are below those of other pupils nationally, particularly in mathematics and for the most able pupils.
- Until recently, the school did not have an effective assessment system in place to evaluate pupils' progress from their starting points and to ensure that learning activities are closely matched to pupils' needs.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are too low. As a result, there is much disruption to pupils' learning, which prevents them from achieving well.
- Leaders and governors have not ensured that additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are spent effectively.
- There is no agreed and consistent approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. Consequently, pupils do not receive appropriate teaching to enable them to achieve well.
- Systems for performance management are not in place to ensure that teachers know how to improve teaching and learning rapidly.
- Due to turbulent staff changes, there is very little capacity within middle leadership. Middle leaders are new in post and have not had sufficient training to monitor teaching and learning effectively.
- The curriculum does not provide pupils with the skills, knowledge and understanding needed to make progress and learn effectively. Therefore, many pupils have gaps in their learning. They have not been well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The school has the following strengths

- Safeguarding is highly effective. Leaders have created a strong culture of vigilance to ensure pupils are kept safe.
- Care and guidance for pupils has improved and is valued and appreciated by parents.
- Teaching and learning in the early years is improving to enable children to make strong progress from their starting points.

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?

- Increase leadership capacity, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - performance management procedures are effective so that teachers know what actions they need to take to improve their teaching rapidly
 - governors hold school leaders fully to account for the school's performance and the progress of pupils
 - additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are used effectively to improve outcomes
 - the school's curriculum provides pupils with the skills and knowledge required to make the progress expected of them, ensuring that they achieve well
 - middle leaders are provided with further appropriate training to develop their skills in monitoring teaching and learning effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - there is an agreed approach to teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, which is consistent across the school, so that the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations is improved
 - teachers receive the appropriate training, support and effective monitoring needed to improve the quality of their teaching rapidly
 - teachers plan learning tasks that are matched to pupils' needs, including within the early years
 - leaders establish the new assessment system fully
 - teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning attitudes and behaviours so that disruption is reduced, enabling all pupils to make progress.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide activities that challenge the most able pupils sufficiently for them to make the progress of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics
 - there are opportunities for all pupils to apply what they know and can do in mathematics, through problem-solving and reasoning activities.

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

It is recommended that additional newly qualified teachers should not be appointed by the school until effective performance management procedures are in place.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Weak leadership and management, over time, has resulted in a decline in the standard of education provided for pupils. Previous leaders and governors have not taken effective action to improve teaching and learning. This has had a detrimental effect on the achievement of pupils.
- Until very recently, leaders and governors held an overly generous evaluation of the school's performance. Plans for improvement were ineffective and did not tackle directly issues raised by the fall in pupils' achievement. The current senior leadership team have a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have accurately identified the actions required to raise pupils' achievement. However, the plans for improvement lack clear actions, timescales or success criteria. Therefore, governors are unable to check whether these plans are bringing about improvements.
- Leaders have not used performance management and professional development of staff effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Systems are not in place to enable teachers to know how to improve teaching, learning and assessment to ensure that pupils achieve well. Leaders have not provided teachers with clear actions and success criteria to improve their performance.
- The school's assessment system has not, until recently, provided teachers and leaders with an accurate understanding of pupils' progress from their starting points. Assessment information is not used effectively to set learning activities that are matched closely to pupils' needs. As a result, too many pupils have fallen behind the expectations for their age.
- There is a lack of capacity in school leadership beyond that of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. There has been much turbulence in staffing since the current headteacher took up post. As a result, middle leaders are very few in number and new to post. They require the appropriate training to enable them to support senior leaders in moving the school forward.
- The curriculum does not inspire pupils or appeal to their interests. It has not prepared pupils well for the next stages of their learning. As a result, pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are not well developed across a range of subjects. However, leaders have begun to create a new curriculum which takes account of the needs of the pupils and the locality in which they live.
- Leaders' actions to improve the provision for disadvantaged pupils have not been effective over time. There has been little evaluation of the impact of the additional support provided for pupils. As a result, the progress of too many disadvantaged pupils is below that of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Sports premium funding is being used effectively to provide pupils with suitable provision and teaching in physical education and after-school activities. There has been an increase in engagement and participation in sporting events. These opportunities are appreciated by the pupils. However, the impact of the funding has not been sufficiently well evaluated to enable the leader to adapt the provision for further improvement in future years.

- Since taking up their posts, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have had a positive impact on the school. The headteacher is tackling ineffective teaching and has focused on transforming the learning environment. These leaders are ambitious and have high expectations.
- Opportunities for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development are well established and this is a strong feature of the school's work. For example, collective worship is regularly led by members of the local community, who provide positive role models for the pupils.

Governance of the school

- Over time, governors have not held school leaders to account sufficiently for the decline in standards. They have had limited accurate information to evaluate the school's performance fully. As a result, governors have not persistently challenged school leaders to ensure that pupils achieve the standards of which they are capable. There have been several changes of governors, hampering the governing body's effectiveness in moving the school forward. The governing body are now receiving appropriate information and reports from the current headteacher. Some governors visit the school regularly and have begun to ask more challenging questions of leaders.
- Governors have not been swift in seeking improvements. External support and challenge have not prevented the decline in leadership, teaching and pupils' outcomes. There has been too much time lost between seeking advice and actions being taken.
- Governors have not secured effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, the progress of these pupils and their outcomes are not good enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have created an open and honest culture of vigilance for safeguarding. The systems implemented by the designated safeguarding leader have been highly effective in ensuring that pupils are safe from harm. Actions taken by leaders in response to concerns regarding pupils' safety are swift. They have a positive effect on securing intervention by external agencies to support both pupils and their families.
- Staff are well aware of their responsibilities due to regular and informative training. Staff are secure in their knowledge of the procedures in school and familiar with guidance in areas such as child protection, radicalisation and extremism. The school's systems ensure that staff are recruited safely. Staff and governors have received training to ensure that they recruit appropriate staff.
- Pupils report that they generally feel safe in school. They understand the school's own systems to keep safe and they talk about how to keep themselves safe online. They are confident that the adults in school would help them if they were worried or concerned.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Weak teaching over time has prevented pupils acquiring the knowledge, skills and understanding to enable them to make sufficient progress. Teachers are not using assessment information accurately to provide learning matched to pupils' needs. As a result, there is insufficient challenge provided for pupils, especially the most able.
- Currently, there is no agreed and/or consistent approach to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, teachers are not provided with clear guidance on what, or how, to teach effectively to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Teaching does not sufficiently challenge pupils to produce their best work, particularly the most able. As a result, the majority of pupils find it difficult to sustain their concentration and maintain positive attitudes to learning. The resulting poor behaviour is a regular feature of lessons and is sometimes unchallenged by class teachers. Therefore, work produced by pupils is often of a low quality and quantity. This is hampering their progress to achieve expected standards.
- Teachers have low expectations of pupils and what they can achieve. Teachers too often provide learning activities where pupils are unclear about the tasks they are required to undertake. Teachers are not providing pupils with clear and sufficient guidance on how to improve their work. As a result, progress is limited.
- English teaching is not encouraging pupils to make corrections of commonly misspelled words. Teachers are not consistently following the school's feedback and marking policy to help pupils identify common errors in their work. As a result, pupils are not developing these skills in their writing.
- The school's work on improving pupils' reading has had limited impact. Actions taken by leaders to address these weaknesses are not yet improving pupils' skills. Too many pupils do not reach the expected standards by the end of key stages 1 and 2. In addition, teachers' questioning and activities do not sufficiently develop pupils' use of inference and deductive skills. There has been an investment in extending the number and range of quality texts available to pupils. However, these are not being used effectively.
- In mathematics, pupils' understanding of calculations is developing. Pupils are becoming increasingly confident in written methods of calculations. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to apply their understanding through problem-solving and reasoning activities. Until recently, teachers rarely planned activities that challenged pupils to develop their problem-solving and mathematical reasoning. The most able pupils are not being encouraged to develop these skills. As a result, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Until recently, there has been a lack of clear provision for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities throughout the school. The new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is beginning to enable teachers to know how to plan for pupils' individual needs. However, much of this work is in its infancy and little impact has been seen.
- Phonics teaching, although inconsistent, is improving. The majority of pupils are now meeting the standards expected at the end of Year 1. Pupils' ability to develop and

apply their early reading skills is in line with the expectation for pupils of their age nationally.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Inadequate

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils have a limited understanding of themselves as successful learners. Many pupils are not able to articulate what they can do to improve. Some pupils are overly dependent on the support of adults and lack the resilience needed to complete learning tasks and activities. This is because learning activities are not well matched to their needs. Some pupils have a lack of pride in their work. As a result, they are not producing work of sufficient quality to improve their learning.
- The school provides well for the physical and emotional well-being of the pupils. They have identified pupils who benefit from additional support, such as play therapy and activities to meet their sensory needs. This is an aspect of the school's work that is developing further due to the intervention of the new SENCo. However, there is, as yet, little evidence of impact.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are aware of how to keep themselves safe in school and in the wider world, including 'stranger danger' and some knowledge of how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils report that there are very few incidents of bullying, racism or homophobia. When these are reported, they are dealt with effectively by teachers and school leaders. Pupils know the importance of being active and living a healthy lifestyle.
- The school has developed a caring ethos, which is evident in the mainly positive relationships between pupils and adults. Pupils and parents value and appreciate the guidance and support provided for them by the staff.
- The breakfast club provides a safe and friendly environment for pupils to start the day and be ready to learn. This is well attended and used by parents as well. Parents who spoke with inspectors commented that this is a positive experience. Improved activities are being provided to support pupils with sensory needs and for pupils who find routines difficult.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is inadequate.
- Leaders are beginning to ensure appropriate implementation of the behaviour policy. However, the policy is still not consistently applied across the school by all staff. As a result, behaviour remains inadequate.
- High- and low-level disruption prevent pupils from making the progress that they should; pupils distract each other in the classroom. This poor behaviour is not always challenged effectively by the class teachers.

- Exclusion rates within the school have been extremely high over the past year. The proportion of pupils being excluded is not reducing. This is affecting pupils' progress and attendance in school. Plans to support some of these pupils have not been implemented swiftly to have impact on addressing the reasons behind their poor behaviour.
- Leaders have worked well with pupils, parents and outside agencies to ensure that attendance rates are in broadly line with those nationally. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent remains higher than that of all pupils nationally.
- Pupils' conduct moving around the school is orderly and relationships at playtimes are usually positive. Older pupils enjoy being given the responsibility of being 'playtime buddies' for younger pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Outcomes for pupils over a number of years have been weak, particularly for most able pupils. The progress of pupils in mathematics by the end of Year 6 has been extremely low compared to that of all pupils nationally for the past three years. Attainment has remained consistently below that of expected age-related standards in reading and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils reaching expected standards by the end of Year 2 is declining. In recent assessments, fewer than half of pupils reached the expected standards. Very few pupils achieve higher standards at the end of key stage 1 compared to similar pupils nationally.
- The school's most recent assessments show that there are wide inconsistencies in progress, particularly in mathematics across the school. This is particularly evident where the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been inadequate. Conversely, in some year groups there is stronger progress where teaching is improving.
- Current pupils' work shows that attainment and progress are inconsistent, with too few pupils working at the higher standard across subjects. In English, pupils' spelling is frequently inaccurate. The vocabulary choices pupils use to extend and enrich their writing are limited. Pupils are not able to accurately apply their knowledge of calculations into problem-solving and reasoning in mathematics. They do not acquire the language to explain their thinking when completing these activities.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make consistent progress in reading, writing or mathematics in either key stage. The effectiveness of additional support and interventions has not been fully evaluated because the assessment system has not been fit for purpose over time. Consequently, teachers and leaders have not had a clear enough focus on pupils' needs.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make inconsistent progress from their starting points. This is because learning activities and additional support are not closely matched to their individual needs, which has limited their progress over time.

- The proportion of pupils who pass the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen over the past year. This has enabled pupils in Year 2 to be able to segment and blend letters more accurately and become more fluent readers.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years leader now has a more accurate view of the strengths and areas for development to enable children to make progress across the different areas of the early years curriculum. Her actions and evaluations of previous assessments have enabled her to adapt the teaching to meet the needs of the children more effectively.
- Children enter Reception with starting points that are generally lower than those expected. As a result of improving teaching, learning and assessment, the children who left Reception in summer 2018 made stronger progress than children in previous years. However, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is below the national average. Too few most-able children exceed the early learning goals.
- Leaders' strategies and plans for improving teaching, learning and assessment are not fully embedded. There is a lack of challenging activities planned for the most able pupils, which is hampering their attainment and progress.
- Leaders have created a positive learning environment. Consequently, children are developing positive attitudes towards their learning. Children are beginning to develop their understanding of words, numbers and the world, in addition to their communication and listening skills. They learn and play well. Collaboration is a common feature, with children working together to solve problems successfully, both academically and behaviourally.
- Work to address weaknesses in children's speaking and listening have been successful this year. This has meant that children are able to sustain their concentration during whole-class teaching as well as working in groups. Leaders are aware of the physical needs of the children and have planned suitable activities with additional support to improve their manipulation skills as well as larger movement.
- Children behave well and keep themselves safe by following the routines and expectations of staff who work with them. They are able to sustain their involvement in activities and talk together about their interests and the tasks in hand.
- Relationships between children and adults are warm and encouraging. Adults provide good care and support for children. Children settle into school quickly and well. Parents are encouraged to play an active role in their child's learning and early years staff form positive relationships with parents.
- Leaders have changed the learning environment a great deal since the previous inspection, increasing the quality of resources available to help children to become successful learners. Leaders provide children with a variety of activities. Leaders are developing activities in the outdoor area. However, resources are not always used effectively to enable children to make progress.
- Leaders are providing appropriate training for teaching assistants in phonics learning and teaching. The setting is safe and secure. Welfare and safeguarding arrangements are effective.

School details

Unique reference number	139032
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10047637

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rev Richard McKay
Headteacher	Rachael Tucker
Telephone number	01173 772260
Website	www.stnicholas.bristol.sch.uk/
Email address	st.nicholas.p@bristol.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 October 2014

Information about this school

- St Nicholas of Tolentine is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school. It is a stand-alone academy.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2017 and is the fourth headteacher over a three-year period. She has received support from a national leader of education.
- The school falls within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton, Bristol. The school last received a section 48 diocesan inspection in December 2016, with overall effectiveness judged to be 'Good'.
- The proportion of pupils known to eligible for support by pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is above the national average.
- The school has a breakfast club provision, which was part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning across the school. Many observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' current work in books across the curriculum and carried out learning walks across the school.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6 and spoke with them to find out about their attitudes to reading.
- Meetings were held with governors, school leaders and pupils. The lead inspector met with the school's improvement partner and representatives from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton, Bristol.
- Inspectors took account of 14 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and informal discussions with parents when they brought their children to school. Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the staff questionnaire and 16 responses to pupil questionnaires. The inspectors talked to pupils at break and lunchtime, as well as during lessons.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan, school policies, governors' minutes of meetings, and the school's own assessment systems and monitoring records.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of safeguarding evidence, including the school's single central record, behaviour and incident logs and risk assessments.

Inspection team

Paul Smith, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Clair Harrington-Wilcox	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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