

# St Antony's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119516
<b>Local Authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	363905
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Byrne

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	226
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Nick Kennedy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elaine Grimshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 April 2010
<b>School address</b>	Shadsworth Road Blackburn Lancashire BB1 2HP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons, taught by eight teachers, and held meetings with representatives of the local authority, the Interim Executive Board, staff and pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and policies for securing safeguarding and child protection. The team analysed the questionnaires returned by 66 parents and carers and also evaluated those supplied by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 to ascertain whether or not progress and achievement are adequate.
- Whether the quality of teaching is sufficiently challenging and the use of assessment rigorous enough to enable all pupils to make sufficient progress.
- The quality of the curriculum and how well it contributes to the achievement of all pupils.
- The effectiveness with which leaders and managers at all levels drive learning forward and raise attainment, and provide the school with the capacity to improve.

## Information about the school

The school is of average sized for a primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high at over twice the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average, with a below average proportion speaking English as an additional language.

The school has Healthy School status and holds the School's Partnership Award. Since the last inspection, a permanent headteacher has taken up post and an assistant headteacher has been employed. A deputy headteacher has been appointed to take up post in September 2011.

The school is currently governed by an Interim Executive Board that was appointed following the previous inspection when the school was judged to require significant improvement and made subject to a Notice to Improve.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

The school has improved a great deal in the last year and it is now satisfactory. The appointment of a permanent headteacher, who previously supported the school, has driven the improvement, together with the assistance of the Interim Executive Board and local authority staff. A strong focus has been on improving teaching, raising expectations of what pupils can achieve, and keeping a closer watch on pupils' progress.

The impact of everyone's efforts is seen in the good improvement in pupils' progress. A legacy of previous underachievement is evident in pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 which has been broadly average over the last three years with a dip in 2010. Attainment in writing lags behind that in reading and mathematics throughout the school, with boys falling behind girls. Pupils' work in lessons and in their books shows that most pupils are now working at the levels close to those expected for their age. Given children's well below starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the attainment by Year 6 pupils demonstrates satisfactory achievement. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and improving now that there is greater stability in the staff team. Most of the time, pupils are learning successfully because lessons move along at a good pace, expectations are high and there are good opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning. In less effective lessons, pupils are expected to listen rather than getting involved in activities. Too much time is spent completing worksheets and expectations are too low for more-able pupils. The school has understandably focused its efforts on raising attainment in the key skills of literacy and numeracy. Other subjects have not had the same priority. Whilst the curriculum remains satisfactory, there are too few planned opportunities to enable pupils to improve their skills of writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) by applying them independently across the curriculum.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils are well-behaved and have good relationships with each other and the staff. These strengths contribute to the school's orderly and caring atmosphere. Pupils are well-cared for and supported, and the effective management of and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make good progress. They have a satisfactory understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

The school's capacity to improve has increased since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Plans are in place for transferring responsibilities from the Interim Executive Board to a new governing body. The recent appointment of an assistant headteacher and a new deputy headteacher are positive steps to strengthen further the senior team but, in the main, the capacity of middle leaders is underdeveloped. The school knows its main strengths and weaknesses but some of its judgments are too optimistic. This is because

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the assessment and tracking systems lack efficiency in comparing its performance to schools nationally.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment in writing through the school by:
  - providing a wider range of contexts and purposes for all pupils, and particularly boys, to write across the curriculum
  - ensuring that pupils' individual targets and writing tasks are appropriately challenging for all pupils.
- Further improve the quality of teaching so that all is at least good by:
  - ensuring pupils spend most of lesson time actively involved in productive work and working independently
  - ensuring marking sets out the next steps pupils need to take in their learning
  - raising expectations for more-able pupils to accelerate their progress
  - widening opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management to sustain the current improvement by:
  - establishing a governing body to take over from the Interim Executive Board by Autumn 2011
  - developing the skills of middle leaders to monitor rigorously the school's performance in all subject areas and to set clear strategies to raise achievement
  - refining the use of assessment so that data is efficiently processed and used to compare the school's performance with other schools nationally.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

The majority of pupils are industrious in lessons. Pupils are keen to learn and respond particularly well to opportunities to discuss their ideas together and use their knowledge and skills to solve problems. This was evident in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were determined to apply their knowledge of hundreds, tens and units to challenging activities involving the conversion of money from pounds to pence. The majority of pupils have a positive attitude to school and take pride in their work. When lessons lack pace and are not relevant to pupils' lives, their enthusiasm wanes.

Over time, pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and children progress well to very well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The rate of progress varies between classes but nevertheless, standards are broadly average by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, reflecting satisfactory achievement. Within this picture, pupils' achievement in writing is weaker, with boys performing at a lower level than girls. A programme for improving writing has been introduced, but more time is needed for this action to impact fully on pupils'

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attainment. Strategies to improve pupils' understanding of number have had a marked impact on the understanding of those pupils at risk of falling behind. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress. In English and mathematics, progress is accelerating as the impact of better teaching takes effect. In Years 4 and 5, pupils are working at least at the level expected for their age and some exceed this. In Year 6, the legacy of underachievement remains, but pupils are now on track to reach more challenging targets. However, not enough is expected of more-able pupils and there is scope for them to reach higher levels.

The pupils' voice is valued through the contribution of the school council. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities for others by acting as playground helpers and sharing in tidying up in the dining hall. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour support their learning in lessons. The attendance rate has dropped in recent years but remains better than in schools in a similar context. The pupils' mostly good attitudes to work, coupled with a satisfactory understanding of the basics of literacy and numeracy prepare them satisfactorily for their next stage of education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

**How effective is the provision?**

The most effective lessons are characterised by good planning and setting suitable expectations for pupils of all abilities. Skilled questioning helps pupils to think through their ideas and evaluate their own learning. Purposeful, focused talk between pairs of pupils

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and good support by teaching assistants further helps effective learning. Less effective features include teachers talking for too long and not providing clear enough explanations and instructions. Consequently, pupils' attention slips, they are not all sure what to do, and they have too little time to practise what they are being taught. At times, assessment is not used effectively enough to make sure that work is tailored to match the full range of pupils' abilities. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but the quality of marking varies between classes. At times the short-term targets are not precise enough to guide and improve pupils' learning.

The curriculum has a suitable emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills, and on pupils' personal and social education. The introduction of residential and other educational visits is having a positive impact on widening the pupils' horizons. Some adjustments have been made to match the curriculum to the needs of boys, although opportunities for pupils to follow their own interests and lines of enquiry are more limited. There are some opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum but these are relatively few.

Day-to-day care is good, with safe routines established well. Staff know the pupils' personal circumstances well and take appropriate steps to overcome any barriers they may face to their full participation in school life. The contribution of the Family Support Worker is much valued by families in need of support. Pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances, receive good support and are nurtured sensitively so that school is a positive experience. The arrangements for transition through the school and on to secondary education are good.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides secure leadership, supported by the Interim Executive Board. Together, they have been the driving force behind the school's improvement over the last year. Effective steps have been taken to improve the quality of teaching and to establish a culture in which staff feel supported, whilst also taking more responsibility for the progress pupils make in their classes. Targets for pupils' attainment and rates of progress are now being met, although at times more-able pupils could be expected to do better. Improved systems have been introduced to keep close track of how well pupils are doing but are not sharp enough to closely compare performance with other schools. The capacity of the staff to contribute to the school's improvement is satisfactory overall. However, at present not all middle leaders have the skills or school-wide view needed to do so fully effectively.

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The Interim Executive Board fulfils the responsibilities of governance well, drawing on its members' relevant expertise. It has worked with the local authority and the diocese to plan for transition to a governing body. It ensures that statutory requirements are met, for example, in relation to safeguarding pupils. Good partnerships benefit pupils. Links with agencies from education, health and welfare help pupils and families to take advantage of school life. Close partnerships with other schools, for example, the nearby secondary school, adds to the pupils' opportunities for learning. The promotion of community cohesion has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Productive links with a partner school are widening the experiences of pupils and the school is committed to developing stronger global links. The school itself is harmonious community in which everyone is valued.

Parents and carers feel increasingly welcome in the school and have become more involved in its life and work. This is demonstrated in the Early Years Foundation Stage where many parents and carers are keen to come into school to liaise with staff to seek ways of helping their children at home. Home-school books have been introduced to promote liaison between school and home. There are, however, no formal arrangements to enable parents and carers to contribute to decision making. The school is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. It teaches the importance of valuing every individual and there is a determination for the gaps in performance of some pupils to be removed.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides an effective start to children's education and good quality care in a rich and welcoming environment. When children join the nursery, their skills are typically well below those expected for their age. Children make good to



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very good progress overall and, by the end of reception, their skills close to average in most areas of their learning. They do particularly well in their personal and social development, and in their early reading and mathematical skills. Their early writing skills are a relative weakness. Provision for writing has improved this year with more frequent direct teaching and more opportunities for writing built into the provision, such as the garden centre and opportunities for children to write their own version of the nursery rhyme 'Hickory-Dickory Dock'.

The children greatly enjoy learning from the wide range of appealing often imaginative activities, indoors and outside. These are planned carefully so they all promote effective learning and offer a good balance of children's choice and adult direction. The children develop independence and good concentration and they have good attitudes. Relationships with other children and with adults are excellent.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader manages the setting effectively. Children are safe and secure at all times. Staff check on children's progress carefully in all areas of learning and provide activities that match individual children's needs. High expectations are set and all staff work as team to maintain a good overview of the provision and the quality of teaching. Staff are deployed to good effect. They know what is expected of them at all times and they have time to join children's play in ways that enrich learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Just under a third of parents and carers returned their questionnaires. Most are happy with the school and rate it highly. The majority feel that they are well informed and say that teachers are always willing to speak if any concerns exist. Parents and carers comment that the school prepares their children well and gives them a safe and secure place to learn. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is understandably praised. A few parents and carers had some reservations about pupils' behaviour. Inspection observations, the views of the large majority of parents and carers and of the pupils themselves, indicate that behaviour is good although there are a few occasions when some pupils exhibit anti-social behaviour. Incidents of any misbehaviour are dealt with effectively by staff.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Antony's RC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 226 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	53	28	42	2	3	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	34	52	26	39	3	5	3	5
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	44	29	44	7	11	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	39	30	45	8	12	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	31	47	28	42	6	9	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	48	29	44	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	44	29	44	7	11	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	32	38	58	4	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	39	36	55	3	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	36	26	39	7	11	8	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	36	35	53	3	5	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	22	33	33	50	4	6	4	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	45	28	42	5	8	3	5

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



11 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Antony's RC Primary School, Blackburn BB1 2HP**

Thank you for welcoming the team when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you and learned a lot about how well you are doing. This letter is to report our judgements to you.

You will know that the school was given a 'notice to improve' when it was last inspected. I am delighted to tell you that it has improved so much in the last year that it no longer requires that extra support and your school is now satisfactory. Throughout the school, your progress has improved and your learning is better, although you could do better in writing. Those of you who find learning more difficult than others are given good support, but those of you who find lessons easier than others could at times be challenged more. Adults take good care of you, helping you to grow up well. We were pleased to see how well you all get along together, and are willing to learn about how to stay safe and healthy. Most of you behave well and that helps your lessons run smoothly enabling you to learn.

Your headteacher has played an important part in your school's improvement. I know that you, too, have all risen to the challenge. You might not know much about the Interim Executive Board and the local authority but they have also helped the school a lot. It has been agreed that it now needs to have its own governing body. We have asked the adults with special responsibilities to make sure that all teaching is at least good and to check more carefully on your learning and the progress you are making.

I am sure that you will have good ideas to help the school keep on getting better and you will be able to suggest them through the school council. We wish you all well for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne

Lead inspector

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