

St Michael with St John CofE Controlled Primary School

Swallow Drive, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 6LE

Inspection dates 19-20 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school because:

- Pupils from a low starting point on entry achieve well with the progress they make, exceeding what is expected. As a result, while overall attainment is below the national average, the gap between is narrowing.
- Good attention is given to the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. Daily early reading lessons are highly effective in ensuring younger pupils improve their reading skills.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with some examples of outstanding teaching. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils.
- Pupils are polite, behave well, have a good understanding of the importance of feeling safe and it is a pleasure to talk to them. Attendance is high, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.
- Parents are happy with the school. The community Galaxy centre is used effectively to support the needs of the local community.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, based on a school's strong emphasis on mutual respect.
- It is well led and managed by a headteacher who has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve teaching and thus pupils' achievement even further. She receives good support from the senior leadership team and from the governing body.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. In a minority of lessons teachers do not adapt planned activities effectively enough to the needs of the pupils, especially the more able.
- While the progress pupils make exceeds what is expected, it is not yet high.
- Pupils are not always made fully aware of how they can further improve the quality of their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons of which two were joint observations with senior staff. Additional short visits to lessons were undertaken to look at how well pupils behave and at other aspects of school life.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils chosen at random, members of the governing body, senior staff and parents. A discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read.
- Pupils' current work and work from the previous year were scrutinised.
- Full account was taken of information available from the school's tracking systems of pupils' progress.
- Inspectors took account of 4 responses to the online questionnaire [Parent View].

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Elisabeth Fenwick	Additional inspector
Elaine Maloney	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is in line with national figures.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and whose first language is not English are well above average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for learning and progress.
- The school has achieved many awards including Eco status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to accelerate the rate of pupils' progress even further, raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring teachers make effective use of information gathered during lessons and from pupils' tracking information to provide consistently challenging work for pupils, especially the more able
 - making better use of marking
 - ensuring the work done in sharing outstanding practice has sufficient impact.
- Ensure pupils have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve the quality of their work even further.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy what they are asked to do. As such the climate for learning is of a good quality. For example, a well-planned library rota allows pupils to read for pleasure at lunchtimes, rather than go outside. Many pupils take advantage of this facility because they enjoy reading.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age, especially in communication. Good teaching and well-planned activities across the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that children achieve well. However, the quality of resource provision outside does not match the very good quality in classrooms.
- Despite making good progress, pupils enter Year 1 with skills below those expected, with some variation from year to year.
- In Years 1- 6 achievement continues to be good as a result of good teaching overall. The school has improved assessment systems and the information gathered is beginning to be used well by staff; its use is better in some classes than in others, to ensure all groups of pupils, including Indian and Pakistani pupils at an early stage of learning English, make good progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding make good progress.
- Almost a third of the 2011-12 Year 6 cohort of pupils made better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics but overall attainment, while showing signs of improvement, was below average.
- Pupils are making good progress in developing their early reading skills because of a well-planned programme of early reading activities.
- Well-planned support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is effective in making sure these groups of pupils make good progress.
- Inspection evidence and the school's own data demonstrate that a higher proportion of pupils are showing the potential to attain or exceed the expected National Curriculum levels this year.
- Pupils are keen to talk about their work and take a real pride in what they do. However, in some classes they do not have a good understanding of what they can do to improve their own work further. Where comments are made in marking some teachers do not make sure pupils take full notice of the comments made.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching across the school has a positive impact on pupils' learning because it is of a good quality, with some teaching which is outstanding. Classes are managed well, teachers have good subject knowledge, relationships are of a high quality and the pace of lessons is good overall.
- The good quality of teaching contributes to pupils' good behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning. Classrooms are welcoming and interesting and support learning well.
- Teachers take the opportunity to thread the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development into the curriculum. For example, a focus on pupils' understanding the meaning of compassion is very apparent throughout the school.
- A highly-skilled team of staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure children make good progress.
- Teaching assistants carry out their duties effectively. They are well deployed, with strong support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and to those at an early stage of learning English.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers use the knowledge they gain from assessment to adjust their questioning and set new tasks well, especially for the more able. Time to consolidate learning is provided or the level of challenge is increased. For example, in an outstanding lesson observed, Year 2 pupils were given a picture and asked to write descriptive

sentences, using correct punctuation to describe what they saw. One pupil's writing included the sentence, 'A bird is blowing the big, bad wolf away'.

- Where teaching is not as strong, questioning is not used well, with teachers not adjusting lesson content to match pupils' needs, if this required, especially for more-able pupils.
- Teachers sometimes miss opportunities when marking pupils' work to provide them with comments about how they might improve on their previous best.
- The curriculum is of a good quality with a strong focus on developing pupils' basic skills. Teachers are also using topic work well in enabling pupils to use these skills in other subjects.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching across the school but the work that has been done with regard to sharing this with all members of staff has yet to have sufficient impact.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- From a good start in the Nursery, pupils develop good social skills and very positive attitudes to learning as shown by their attendance, which is high when compared with national data.
- Pupils are well behaved because they understand what is required and respond well to the school's ethos of mutual respect: they understand the importance of caring for others.
- Pupils respond well to the many and varied opportunities the school provides for them to take responsibility. The school even has lead monitors to monitor what other monitors are doing. For example, a lead monitor, when asked what would she do if another pupil monitor was not carrying out his/her duties well enough, said, 'I would fire them!'
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and understand the potential dangers of the internet.
- Pupils have a good understanding of all forms of bullying, including bullying based on prejudice, and say it is not tolerated in school. They say that if they have a worry there is someone to turn to who will help. In addition, pupils show a great concern for others less fortunate than themselves.

The leadership and management are good

- Strong leadership and management by the headteacher have ensured the school has improved since the previous inspection. Good support is provided by the senior staff and by the school's business manager.
- The school has recently improved the way it tracks the progress pupils make, with action taken to provide additional support where needed. For example, reading was identified as a priority because some pupils were not making expected progress. Effective steps have now been taken to address this issue.
- The school provides a very safe environment with the safety of pupils and staff paramount.
- The school's own self evaluation is accurate and the school's development plan has a clear focus on continuous improvement. Members of the senior leadership team carry out their duties well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- A key aspect of the school's success is a well-planned programme, including the involvement of senior staff, to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Effective action is taken to address any weaknesses.
- The curriculum is well organised and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities is available and much appreciated by the pupils.
- The school's performance management arrangements are highly effective and members of staff spoken to during the inspection were very appreciative of the support they receive.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. Parents and pupils spoken to during the inspection confirm the inspection team's judgement that equality of opportunity is promoted well and all forms of discrimination are not tolerated. Good-quality relations are at the heart of the school.

■ The local authority provides appropriate and effective support and challenge to this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- This is of good quality; all legal requirements are met.
 - Members of the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development; they hold the school to account with rigour.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119356
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	405854

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Acting Chair	Michael Poultney
Headteacher	Sarah Murphy
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2011
Telephone number	01254 665190
Fax number	01254 268731
Email address	smsj@blackburn.gov.uk

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