

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School

Common Edge Road, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY4 5DF,

Inspection dates 7–8 November 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.

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress; attainment in reading and mathematics is above the national average.
- Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class and experience and enjoy greatly a well planned and exciting range of activities.
- The governing body provides good support. It challenges when necessary because governors know very well what the school needs to do to be even better.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and some of the teaching is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy being in school. They say they feel safe and cared for well. Behaviour is good and pupils show a respect for each other and for the adults in school.
- The headteacher leads the school very effectively and is well supported by the deputy headteacher. Leaders are skilled at identifying how well the school is doing. They take decisive action to rectify identified weaknesses.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is good rather than outstanding. Sometimes the work set for the more able pupils is not hard enough and opportunities are missed to help pupils improve their writing skills.
- Some pupils make slower progress in writing across Years 4 to 6. As a result, attainment in writing is below that in reading and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. Additional short visits in lessons were carried out to look at important issues such as how well pupils get on with their classmates and how well they behave.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils (randomly chosen), members of the governing body and with senior staff. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about the types of books they enjoyed and why.
- Pupils' current work and available work and assessment from the previous academic year were scrutinised, including information which showed how well they do in English and mathematics.
- Twenty two responses were received to the on line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Most members of staff completed the voluntary staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Robert Birtwell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a broadly average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, including those entitled to free school meals and those looked after by the local authority, is below average.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved many awards, including Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the existing best practice is shared across the school
 - more varied and demanding work is provided for the more able pupils, so that they have more opportunities to plan and organise their own learning
 - teachers constantly check, through questioning, pupils’ understanding and learning as lessons proceed, adjusting the planned tasks, where necessary, by what they find out.
- Ensure achievement in writing is as good as in reading and mathematics in Key Stage 2 by:
 - giving pupils more regular opportunities to write at length
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills well in other subjects
 - making sure that pupils take on board comments made by teachers when marking their work, with regard to improving both the quality of content and the quality of presentation.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Progress in almost all lessons observed during the inspection was good or better. Pupils enjoy learning because teachers plan work that motivates them. This was seen in an English lesson in Year 2 where outstanding teaching stimulated pupils to very markedly improve their writing by building in suspense. One pupil started his story with the line, 'I was terrified as I went to open the creaking gate.'
- Children start school with skills that are usually just below those expected for their age. Good and often outstanding teaching in the Reception class ensures children settle well into school life. They make good progress, especially in their personal development and in basic communication skills and mathematics. By the end of the Reception Year they are working well within the expected levels for their age. A real strength is in the way that children's progress is checked on and the curriculum adapted to meet their needs both in the classroom and in the outside area.
- Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 builds successfully on what has been achieved previously and as a result, their attainment is above the expected levels by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- While overall progress continues to be good in Years 3 to 6 in reading and mathematics, progress in writing is not consistently good. However, as a result of the school's actions attainment in writing is rising in Year 3 but not yet in other years. There are some good examples of pupils being challenged to write at length and to use their writing skills in other subjects but not by all teachers. While marking has been improved, not enough is done to make sure pupils take full notice of how they might improve both the content of their writing and the way it is presented.
- Attainment in reading is above the national average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils say that they love reading. This is because the teaching of reading skills is particularly effective and most pupils have great confidence in their reading ability. Pupils say they read for pleasure both within and outside school.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress and there is no significant gap between the achievement of this group with that achieved by pupils who are not eligible for free school meals.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because teachers and support staff check their progress closely and provide good support.
- Senior leaders have strengthened the ways in which they check how well pupils are doing. As a result, any pupils who are falling behind are identified promptly and support provided to make sure they catch up.
- The majority of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire felt that their children make good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- School staff have very effective working relationships with the pupils and classrooms are organised well. Pupils' responses in lessons are valued greatly and as a result pupils are never frightened to put forward their ideas.
- A strong feature of teaching is in the effective way issues relating to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs are interwoven into lessons. During the inspection, a lesson with older pupils focusing on Remembrance Sunday and what it stands for was successful in raising pupils' understanding of why it is held each year.
- The teaching of reading is a major strength. Teachers across the school ensure that pupils are given plenty of opportunities to use and extend their reading skills.

- Where teaching is outstanding, staff work very successfully to provide activities that really motivate pupils to want to learn. For example, those in the Reception class made excellent progress in finding out about the festival of Divali. The challenge of preparing a 'secret' party for their Year 5 playground buddies really captured their imagination.
- Where teaching is good rather than outstanding evidence from pupils' books and lesson observations shows that too few opportunities are provided for the more able pupils to organise their own learning and some of the work is not varied or hard enough.
- In some classes, pupils are not asked to use and develop their writing skills well, either in literacy lessons or in other subjects.
- Staff make good use of questions to encourage pupils to describe what they are doing and thinking. However, sometimes teachers do not adjust activities when it is clear that they are either too difficult or too easy for a particular group of pupils. Consequently, progress slows for these groups in these lessons.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive teaching that is of a good quality. Support staff are used well to support their learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work diligently. However, not enough is done in making sure that pupils take on board the comments made.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- This is a school where pupils get on really well with each other and with the staff. This is a key factor in ensuring that good progress is made.
- Most parents are sure the school provides a safe environment and that pupils enjoy school and behave well.
- An analysis of records of pupils' behaviour and observations made during the inspection show that behaviour over time is good.
- Pupils are confident and polite in conversation with staff and visitors. They respond well to the many opportunities provided for them to take on responsibilities in the school. These include being a member of the school council, a peer mediator or being a playground pal to younger pupils.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school can be seen in their regular attendance and in their punctual arrival at the start of the day. Reception children, with no prompting from their teacher, have had an attempt at writing their own name in the classroom, before the bell goes to officially start the school day.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. They have a firm understanding of different types of bullying. They are confident that should any ever occur, adults would deal with it quickly, fairly and firmly.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers are ambitious and have high expectations. The school accurately analyses how well it is doing. Consequently, the school improvement plan is realistic and highly focused. It shows firmly the school's ambition to improve outcomes for all groups of pupils equally.
- The successful spiritual, moral, social and cultural programme of support for pupils is integrated into everything the school sets out to achieve for its pupils.
- Strong management of the quality of teaching and the impact it has on pupils' progress has brought about improvements since the previous inspection. Not only that, it has led to effective members of staff being promoted to positions of responsibility in other schools. A recent focus on the use of data about pupils' progress has resulted in teachers having a more accurate understanding of how this information can be used better to help pupils learn and achieve higher

standards.

- The responses to the staff questionnaires indicate that staff think highly about the leadership of the school and of the provision made for their professional development.
- Leaders ensure that no pupils, regardless of background, or need, are denied access to anything the school has to offer. Equal opportunities are pursued with rigour.
- Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders ensure that all requirements are met and that the building is a safe place where learning can take place.
- The curriculum is of a good quality. Pupils are taught a broad range of interesting topics. However, not enough is done to make sure that there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in Years 4 to 6. Subjects such as music are high on the agenda and a significant number of pupils are learning to play instruments. Pupils say they enjoy lessons and the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors take their responsibilities very seriously. They ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Governance is well organised and well informed showing a good understanding of the school and its context. They know what is happening in school through detailed information they receive including the progress pupils make. The governors know how the budget is allocated. They are aware of how the extra money provided for pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is used and that these pupils make good progress.

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	119596
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	405869

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 -11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Guerin
Headteacher	Melanie Haggerty
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2010
Telephone number	01253 762833
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