

# St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Devonshire Drive, Clayton-le-Moors, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 5RJ

**Inspection dates** 5–6 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 feel safe and secure in this happy and caring school. They, therefore, thrive and develop confidence.
- Pupils make good progress and reach standards at the end of Key Stage 2 which are above average overall, and particularly high in reading.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers know the pupils well and praise and encourage them. They ask questions which help pupils to reflect on their learning and explain what they have done. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and find them interesting and fun.
- Pupils behave well, are proud of their achievements and enjoy helping each other and adults.
- The curriculum provides a range of rich and memorable experiences for the pupils, which contribute particularly well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher provides good leadership. He sets high standards and has successfully shared his determination to make the school even better with the team of dedicated staff. Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have therefore improved over the past two years.
- Governors have a very good understanding of the school. They have helped to drive improvement through the challenging questions they ask. The school is well placed to improve further.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Pupils do not have a good enough understanding of the levels they are working at and how to make their work better.
- Although progress in writing is good, pupils in both Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly boys, do not do as well as in reading and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes and saw six lessons, and made a number of short visits to small group and one-to-one sessions. She listened to pupils reading and observed the teaching of early reading skills. She also looked at examples of pupils' work to get a view of teaching and progress over time.
- Discussions took place with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of 18 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), the school's analysis of the most recent parent surveys carried out by the school, and six staff questionnaires.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including data on pupils' progress throughout the school, the school's evaluation of its effectiveness and its development planning, records of the quality of teaching and learning, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documentation in relation to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Christine Potter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. This is funding provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, are looked after by the local authority or are children of families in the services.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is above average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

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

- Improve teaching so that its overall quality is outstanding by:
  - always making sure that pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and that the work set and pace of lessons are well matched to pupils' different abilities
  - giving pupils more opportunities to assess their own learning and find out what they need to do to reach the next level, so that they can become more independent and aspire to reach higher standards
  - sharing more fully the best practice that exists within the school.
- Further accelerate progress in writing, particularly for boys, so that standards at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 are the same as those in reading and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that basic skills of grammar, punctuation, spelling and handwriting are taught more systematically across the school
  - making better use of opportunities in other subjects to develop pupils' writing skills
  - using marking and feedback more effectively so that pupils know precisely how they can improve their work and are given opportunities to respond to this
  - improving the way that leaders check the quality of pupils' written work to make sure that teaching and marking are consistent and that all pupils are making enough progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- A large majority of children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below those typically expected for their age, and sometimes well below. From these low starting points, good teaching means that most pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. The enthusiasm of the adults who work with them means they are excited and keen to learn. There is a well-planned range of activities, indoors and out, which successfully develop their basic skills, especially in language. Adults engage them in conversation at every opportunity and they love talking about what they are doing. Children enjoyed thinking of words to describe the texture of ingredients in gingerbread men.
- Children quickly develop early reading skills through systematic teaching of the links between letters and sounds. The youngest children enjoy games to identify initial sounds in words. They soon start to sound words out confidently and enjoy the challenge of reading and writing 'tricky' words. This love of reading is fostered successfully throughout the school. An above average percentage of pupils reach the expected standards in reading words in Year 1. Pupils in Year 6 are eager to read aloud and discuss their preferences for different authors. A significant proportion of these pupils reach the higher Level 5 in reading, resulting in standards in this subject being high.
- The school is aware that progress in writing, although now accelerating, is not yet fast enough. Boys in particular do not reach similar standards in writing to those that they achieve in reading and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that the basic skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling are not being taught consistently. There is insufficient attention to improving pupils' handwriting. The revised curriculum is being used well to stimulate pupils' imagination so that both boys and girls are now much more eager to write. However, teachers do not always structure these opportunities well enough to improve pupils' writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Specific programmes are put in place at an early stage to support those who are at risk of falling behind in their learning. As a result of this, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good, and in some cases, exceptional progress.
- The school has made effective use of money from pupil premium funding to provide one-to-one study support for eligible pupils. As a result, more of them are now doing as well as others in the school.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good throughout the school. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and use praise effectively to encourage them. Teachers know the pupils well and have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils enjoy their lessons and say that teachers make them interesting and fun.
- Teaching assistants play an active part in lessons. Their support for individual pupils and small groups really helps to move learning forward and helps all pupils make good progress.
- In the best lessons, teachers use questioning very well to check pupils' understanding. Pupils are encouraged to explain their reasoning and use the correct terminology. This is particularly the case in mathematics. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils clearly explained how they could use their understanding of place value to identify whether numbers were greater or smaller than each other.
- Practical activities are used effectively to get pupils engrossed in their learning. They jot ideas on white boards and talk to each other about what they are doing. Key Stage 1 pupils made their own paper snowflakes before using this experience to write a set of instructions for others to read.

- In most lessons, teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of different pupils. Occasionally, however, lessons do not move quickly enough or activities are not planned so well to get the best out of all pupils. Sometimes, the purpose of the lesson is not clear enough and pupils do not know exactly what they are going to learn.
- Pupils are given targets to improve their work. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to assess their own learning against these targets, nor to see what levels they are working at and how to move to the next level. They are, therefore, not as independent as they could be. Teachers' marking, particularly in writing, is not always helpful enough. Written comments do not always give clear guidance to pupils on precisely how to improve their work, nor do they have regular opportunities to act on any such advice.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils are exceptionally welcoming and friendly. They behave considerately towards one another and move around the school sensibly. Prefects politely ask pupils to walk in single file as they come back from break times. Pupils are proud of their school; they like helping and taking responsibility and have strong moral standards, such as truthfulness and forgiveness.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and are eager to learn. They work well cooperatively and are also able to work independently when required. However, occasionally some of them do not behave so well when parts of the lesson go on for too long and they lose interest.
- Incidents of bullying or racism are extremely rare. Pupils feel very safe and well cared for in school and know they can always talk to an adult if they are upset. The systems in place to help pupils manage their own behaviour are consistent and effective. Pupils like being able to earn back their silver badges by doing something good to make up for things they have done wrong.
- Parents agree that behaviour in school is good and that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in situations beyond school, such as when riding their bicycles.
- The school has provided individual guidance and support for families to improve their children's attendance. Attendance is currently above average.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher provides clear and purposeful leadership which is focused on giving all pupils equal, and the best, opportunities. He is supported well by the deputy headteacher and governors. Teaching has improved and staff have a shared commitment to improving the school further.
- School leaders are honest and accurate in their judgements about the school and have identified appropriate priorities to improve its performance. The revised curriculum is already beginning to improve the progress pupils make in writing. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching in lessons and provide clear guidance to teachers on how to improve their teaching. However, they do not check pupils' work often enough to ensure that writing skills are being taught consistently well over time and that all teachers are marking in a way that helps pupils make better progress.
- The targets set for teachers to improve their practice are based on rigorous lesson observations and are linked to aspects of pupils' learning that leaders judge need most improvement, for example, boys' writing. The progress of individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is tracked closely by leaders and all teachers. This means they know exactly how well pupils are doing and can plan for individual needs.
- The new curriculum provides a wealth of stimulating experiences for pupils. The recent visit of a Roman soldier to school was a particular talking point. Pupils reflect on their own feelings and experiences and those of others in different places and periods in time. The curriculum, therefore, contributes extremely well to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development. The organisation of pupils into mixed-age groups for mathematics, based on their abilities, leads to good progress in this subject.

- Most parents are supportive of the work of the school and appreciate all that is done to help their children. They enjoy coming into school for parental consultations and the weekly celebration assemblies. The good links established with the local children's centre help parents support their children's learning.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority has effectively supported the new headteacher and now provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Members of the governing body involve themselves at every opportunity in the life of the school and regularly undertake training to improve their knowledge and skills. They are highly supportive of the school and are committed to its improvement. They ask challenging questions which hold senior leaders to account, particularly about how well additional funding, including the pupil premium, has improved pupils' learning. They have a good understanding of the school's performance data and of the quality of teaching. They are kept well informed about the outcomes of staff performance management and decisions relating to pay progression. Governors demonstrate a good understanding of their legal responsibilities.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119659
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403406

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pamela Ward
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Charnock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 July 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 231277
<b>Fax number</b>	01254 230786
<b>Email address</b>	head@st-marys-clayton-le-moors.lancs.sch.uk



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012

