

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley

Holcombe Drive, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 4BH

Inspection dates 11–12 December 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

- The school leaders have high ambitions for the school. They place great emphasis on achieving sustained improvement in the teaching and learning in the school.
- The standard of teaching is consistently good and enables all the pupils to make good progress.
- The behaviour of the pupils, particularly in lessons, is very good. They are keen to learn and as a result, are making good progress.
- The spiritual, moral and social life of the school is one of its strengths. Relationships are a strength of the school. The pupils are well cared for and are provided with a safe and happy environment in which they feel safe and can learn with confidence.
- Governors are very committed to the school. They are well-informed and hold the school to account for its performance.
- Attendance at the school is high and has been for the past five years.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet enabling the pupils to make outstanding progress overall.
- Achievement in writing at Key Stage 1 is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- Children are not given enough opportunities to use the skills they have learnt in English and mathematics in other subjects.
- Marking of pupils' work is not consistent enough. It does not always tell the children what they have to do to improve it.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in all classes and each teacher was observed at least once. This consisted of 16 observations in total over the two days. Inspectors also observed the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in their indoor and outdoor activities as well as in focused lessons. The work in children's books and their Learning Journey books were also examined. The headteacher conducted a joint observation with the lead inspector.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils and a group of parents as well as taking account of the eighteen responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). There were no written responses sent into the school.
- Discussions were held with staff, the representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including the school's checks on the quality of teaching, the school improvement plan and documents relating to the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors heard readers from Years 1, 2 and 6. They also looked at the school's system for checking pupils' progress in English and mathematics over the past three years as well as the current year.

Inspection team

Peter Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

Clare Daniel

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's is an above average size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The large majority of pupils is White British but the school draws from a wide range of minority ethnic groups.
- The school is currently having its nursery re-furbished and builders were in during the time of the inspection. The nursery has been temporarily located in the infants' hall for the duration of the building work.
- The school exceeds the government's current floor standards (the minimum standards and rate of progress expected for primary pupils).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is outstanding and accelerates the progress of pupils by:-
 - more effectively developing the skills of writing in literacy lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that pupils' good knowledge of letters and sounds is used more effectively to improve their writing skills
 - improving the marking of pupils' work so that it shows them how to improve their work
 - giving pupils time to respond to the teachers' marking and to assess their own progress against their targets for improvement
 - giving them more opportunities to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards of attainment have improved since the previous inspection and are continuing to improve. A large proportion of pupils starts in nursery with skills and abilities below those typically expected for their age, particularly in writing and calculation. They leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment which is broadly typical for pupils nationally and better than national expectations in reading. Hence, overall they have made good progress.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes, the amount of progress made by the children has continually improved in most areas of learning over the past three years. Children are now making good progress and are now leaving reception with skills and abilities which are just below the average for their age.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 has been slower than in the other key stages although current school data and inspection evidence show that progress is accelerating. Progress in writing is particularly slow because children are not given enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in literacy lessons.
- By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading and mathematics is just below national averages but attainment in writing is weaker.
- Pupils develop a good knowledge of letters and sounds. Almost all the pupils reached the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening test, nearly twice that achieved by pupils nationally. This is helping them a lot in their reading but less so in their writing because not enough time is given in lessons to practising the use of their knowledge of letters and sounds in their spelling.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is more rapid. Pupils make good progress overall and particularly so in writing. By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average and above average in reading. All pupils and pupil groups, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2. However, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to use the skills they have learnt in English and mathematics in other subjects.
- As a result of the good use made of the pupil premium funding, these pupils achieve well and the gap in attainment with other groups of pupils in the school is closing.
- Current school data show that all year groups and all pupil groupings are now making good progress and this confirms the improving picture.
- Observations of pupils in lessons and examination of the work in their books show that they achieve well in lessons and are making consistently good progress in their learning over time.
- The majority of parents said they were happy with the progress their children made in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The improvement of teaching has been a strong focus for senior leaders since the previous inspection. This has brought about a marked improvement in its quality and effectiveness and as a result, pupils are now making good progress in lessons and attainment is rising.
- Teaching is good because the majority of work is matched well to the abilities of the pupils. Teachers ask pupils searching questions to check on how much they have understood and to move pupils' learning on more quickly. They constantly check in lessons that their pupils are making progress.
- Lessons are managed well and because the pupils are so well-behaved and eager to learn, lessons are able to proceed without disruption. Teaching assistants are used effectively to help individuals or groups who may need additional support and as a result all pupils achieve well.
- Teachers make their lessons lively and interesting, focusing as much as possible on the interests of the pupils. For example, in one lesson, they were asked to take on the role of Ron Weasley, a

character from the Harry Potter novels, and write a letter to one of his friends describing his first experiences of Hogwarts. After being shown short clips from the original film they were asked to 'jump into his shoes' and imagine what his thoughts and feelings would have been to what he was seeing and experiencing. This resulted in high quality work.

- Consistent strengths seen in teaching were good subject knowledge, good classroom organisation, and a lively pace to lessons. Teachers set high expectations of behaviour in classes and as a result lessons progress smoothly without any disruption to learning.
- The vast majority of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. The school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching and the evidence of the work seen in children's books confirm that teaching in the school is now consistently good.
- The school has a thorough system for checking the progress of its pupils. It checks on the progress of individual pupils very carefully. School leaders hold regular meetings on pupil progress with the class teachers and use this information effectively to determine which pupils need extra support to achieve their individual targets. This is ensuring that all pupils are given the chance to achieve well.
- Reading has been given a lot of focus and as a result, there has been a steady improvement in all key stages over the past three years. Pupils enjoy reading and read widely. The books they read at school are matched well to their ability and interests.
- When teaching is less effective, pupils are not given the opportunity to check their own progress. Their targets for improvement are not changed regularly enough and the pupils are not given time to assess their own success in achieving them. Marking is not consistent and does not provide pupils with regular advice on how to improve their work further. Pupils are not given time to think about and respond to the teachers' marking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils at St Mary's want to learn. They listen well to their teachers and behave well in lessons. They work well together and learn from each other. The way teachers organise their classrooms helps pupils learn well.
- Pupils say they are happy and feel safe at school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. The majority of parents say that their children feel safe at school and are cared for well by the staff. They said that the pastoral care and spiritual life of the school are strengths of the school.
- Behaviour around the school is typically good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They show good manners, for example, opening doors for adults without being asked.
- On the whole, pupils play well together on the playground. Pupils say there is very little bullying and that it is dealt with effectively if it occurs.
- There have been very few exclusions over the past three years. The school's records all incidents rigorously and these records show that, on the rare occasions that poor behaviour does occur, that school procedures and policies are followed and appropriate action taken.
- The pupils are keen to take on responsibility. For example, the school council happily told inspectors of how they were involved in the choosing of the new playground equipment. They were also keen to tell inspectors how they are bringing back the playground 'Buddy system' after Christmas.
- Attendance is very good. This is because the school places great importance on good attendance and also, because pupils enjoy school, they want to come. Attendance has been above the national average for the past five years and has shown an improving trend. The proportion of pupils in the school who have very poor attendance is very low and well below the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders are committed to raising the standards of teaching and learning in the school. They use a thorough system for closely checking on the progress of individual pupils and classes and use it effectively to determine whether any pupils are falling behind. They then provide well-targeted support to help pupils to catch up. As a result of this, and also the good use of pupil premium funding, all pupils are making good progress.
 - Leaders have an accurate understanding of how well the school is doing. Key areas for development are identified. The school plans effectively to meet these key priorities.
 - Pupils' achievement has shown an improvement since the previous inspection because the quality of teaching is much better. Training and performance management are linked carefully to identified priorities and teachers' pay.
 - Staff are fully behind the leadership of the school. They feel that they are led and supported well in their professional development.
 - The school curriculum is exciting and makes pupils interested in learning. It provides a range of activities to enrich the learning experience of the pupils through, for example, themed days and weeks such the 'International Peace day' and 'Queen's Jubilee Day'. The curriculum also develops an understanding in the pupils of the importance of a good community and of having respect for other people's beliefs and cultures. The school has good links with other local schools and a school in Gambia.
 - The local authority is fully involved with the school providing support, guidance and training for school leaders and staff to assist in school improvement.
 - The school keeps parents well-informed about their child's progress and an informative web-site and weekly newsletters keep them well-informed about activities happening in school. Parents said that communications from the school were very good and that they were kept informed about their children's progress.
 - The school meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors have a strong commitment to the school and some of them have had a long association with it. They are well-informed about the progress of its pupils and the quality of the teaching and learning. Performance management arrangements meet statutory requirements, they are robust and there is a clear link between staff pay progression and performance. Governors have great confidence in the leadership of the school. They are fully aware of the use of the pupil premium funding and the positive impact it has had on the children for whom it is intended. Minutes of governors' meetings show that they hold the school to account for its performance well.
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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	119703
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	401864

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ellen Daley
Headteacher	Ian Jones
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2010
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