

# St Antony's RC Primary School

Shadsworth Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 2HP

**Inspection dates** 13–14 February 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils do not always make enough progress with reading and writing, particularly at the beginning of Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is not consistently good. The teaching of reading and writing could sometimes be more effective.
- There are missed opportunities with the marking of pupils' work. It sometimes lacks detail and more could be done to ensure that pupils learn from their mistakes.
- Some families do not do enough to make sure that younger children are brought to school regularly. The school has not yet attended to this problem firmly enough.
- Leaders and managers have not always deployed teachers so that they can 'play to their strengths'. Some teachers are more effective at teaching some subjects than others. This adversely affects pupils' progress in some classrooms.

### The school has the following strengths

- This is an improving school. Results for Year 6 in 2012 showed better progress than in 2011. Progress in mathematics from the age of seven to 11 was as good as that found nationally. Pupils now in Year 6 have already reached standards higher than Year 6 pupils last year. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make similar progress.
- From very low starting points, children make good headway in the nursery and reception classes.
- All staff, school leaders and governors uphold the school's mission to be a caring community, ambitious for pupils' success.
- Pupils enjoy school. They behave well. They are unfailingly polite and they are considerate to one another. By Year 6, pupils' personal development is impressive.
- Many lessons are good and there is much good practice on which the school can build.
- The headteacher has brought many improvements to the school. She has a shrewd awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- The governing body is exceptionally well led. Governors are committed and recognise the need for further improvement in the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons, and teaching was seen in all classrooms. Three lessons had shared observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. In addition, brief visits were made to several classrooms, and short sessions were observed with small groups for the development of English and mathematics.
- Meetings were held with five members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also held meetings with senior and middle leaders and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included pupils' work in the current year, data on pupils' achievements in national assessments, information on pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its strengths and areas for development. Records on provision for those pupils who need additional support, safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- There were insufficient responses to be recorded with the online questionnaire (Parent View), but inspectors took account of the school's questionnaire survey of parents. There were 27 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Jim Bennetts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Gaunt

Additional Inspector

Jeremy Barnes

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. About a quarter of the pupils are of minority ethnic family heritage; they have many different backgrounds, including heritage linked to Eastern Europe and to the Indian sub-continent. For about two thirds of these pupils English is not the language of the home, but very few are at an early stage with learning to speak English.
- About half the pupils are eligible for pupil premium (additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority, or known to be eligible for free school meals or whose families are in the armed forces). This is more than twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at the level known as 'school action' is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at 'school action plus', or with a statement of special educational needs, is below average.
- There are generally about 30 pupils in each class, all of the same age group.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the time of the previous inspection, the school was governed by an Interim Executive Board. A governing body has been established under the leadership of a member of the Interim Executive Board.
- A deputy headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school has a before-school and after-school care club.

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

- Improve teaching, to raise achievement, particularly with reading and writing, by:
  - making sure that teachers talk less in lessons and are not so prescriptive about how activities will develop, in order to give pupils more opportunities to work by themselves
  - ensuring that, when pupils are working by themselves or in groups, they have timely support and guidance so that work is always productive
  - providing modified tasks or different levels of support for pupils of different ability so that all are suitably challenged
  - ensuring in teachers' marking that spelling and other errors in pupils' writing are corrected and they have the opportunity to respond to teachers' feedback to produce better work in future.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - working with the local authority to ensure that the persistent absence of some younger pupils is eradicated
  - reviewing the allocation of teaching duties to staff in Key Stage 2 so that teachers are deployed to pupils' best advantage, particularly with regard to reading and writing.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- When young children join the nursery, they have skills and capabilities that are well below those expected for their age. That is particularly evident in their speaking and listening and, for some, in their capacity for interaction with others. With the strong focus on the development of speaking and social skills, they make good headway. However, for most, standards are significantly lower than average when they move to Year 1.
- Pupils make sound progress in the infant classes. Standards at the end of Year 2 vary from year to year but are usually about half a year behind what is found nationally. There are effective arrangements for developing pupils' understanding of the link between letters and sounds, which help them to gain confidence with early reading and spelling. Many Year 1 pupils could follow through from 'catch' to spell words such as 'match' and 'pitch'.
- The school's records show that progress is uneven between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6. Effective classroom teaching, together with an unusually extensive system of additional coaching, ensure that learning improves in the later years. Overall, in recent years, pupils have been about as far behind national standards at the end of Year 6 as they were at the end of Year 2. Standards are higher in mathematics than in reading and writing. Pupils in the present Year 6 did quite well as infants and the school's data suggest that they are likely to have made effective progress to reach at least average standards by the summer.
- In different classrooms across the age range, a few pupils have fluency and understanding with reading that is at least as good as is expected nationally; generally most are weaker. Even with more-able older pupils, spelling is weaker than might be expected. Sometimes this is because they have not considered alternatives when they write, for instance, 'clouds'; sometimes weak spelling is associated with imprecise speaking, for instance with 'mountins'.
- Data from national tests show that those entitled to pupil premium funding do at least as well as others. Pupils who do not always speak English at home rapidly gain in confidence with English and their communication skills are generally on a par with those of other pupils. The school identifies disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and also those who are found to be underachieving, as in need of 'school action' by coaching and support by withdrawal from lessons. Data show that these pupils make as much progress as others. Pupils from minority ethnic groups thrive in the school and do at least as well as others.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- More than half the lessons seen were well taught. There was no outstanding teaching, and no teaching was inadequate. However, there is a need for significant improvement in some teaching and marking.
- In some classrooms a large proportion of lesson time is spent with the teacher talking to the class. This is often productive in teasing out pupils' ideas and developing their abilities in expressing themselves. This was seen in Year 6 where boys and girls were sensitively encouraged to put together persuasive propositions for and against mountain climbing. They knew that gaining command of words was the underlying intention. One boy said 'I know what adrenalin is, but I can't explain it'.
- In some lessons there is not enough time for pupils to get on by themselves. Sometimes activities are so prescriptive that there is limited opportunity for pupils to break new ground in their thinking. Where pupils have the chance to work alone or in groups, staff do not always circulate in the room sufficiently to keep learning moving by prompting and asking probing questions. Occasionally, pupils struggle to get underway when left to themselves because they need more help with a strategy for tackling their work.
- Teachers are well supported by teaching assistants. This is particularly evident in the Nursery and Reception classes.

- Teachers generally devise activities that are appropriate for pupils' abilities and which they enjoy. Pupils are usually attentive and get on with activities as directed by staff.
- The school provides extensive coaching for those who are falling behind, or who find it difficult to learn. The teachers who are the literacy and numeracy coordinators have identified the need for such support and have made careful checks on pupils' progress; they are deployed largely for such coaching. There is also support out of the classroom by teaching assistants. Some well planned, enjoyable and effective activities were seen with a group of Year 4 pupils who were catching up with mathematics. These arrangements support weaker pupils well and are successful in enabling others to make up for lost time. However, more effective learning should be going on in some classrooms.
- Some teachers are diligent with marking. For instance, while the focus of a piece of writing might be use of adjectives, marking also picks up the more significant errors in spelling and punctuation. However, this is not consistent between classrooms. Moreover, where teachers have identified things that a pupil needs to improve, there is a lack of effective follow up to make sure that the pupil gets it right next time.

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

- Pupils enjoy school. They feel that staff take good care of them. They talk in a reflective way about relationships and know that there are many ways in which individuals can be unreasonable with one another. They say that name calling and other forms of bullying are rare and that if they were concerned about such things staff would sorted out any problem.
- In lessons, pupils are cooperative and persevering. They are generally attentive, particularly where lessons are interesting. Pupils of all ages were impressively well mannered and patient during the morning worship to mark Ash Wednesday. As they move about the school and playground, pupils are very considerate towards others.
- By Year 6, pupils have developed good social skills and interact with adults and one another in a mature way – for instance, valuing what others say and giving way for others to express opinions. They recognise risks in the wider community and are cautious about where they go and how they take care of themselves. They value the strong links already established with the local secondary school.
- Pupils' positive attitude and their consideration for others reflect the strong Christian ethos of the school. Pupils play their part well in making St Antony's a happy community where everyone is valued.
- Older pupils who make their own way to school have attendance that compares favourably with similar schools. Some families are not always effective in getting younger children to school and a few take pupils out of school during term time to visit family homelands overseas.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The headteacher has high aspirations for pupils' success, academically and in their personal development. She is well supported by senior staff. Morale is high and staff at all levels make every effort to ensure that this is a happy school where all give of their best. However, leaders know that there is more to be done to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Following a difficult time, leadership and governance of the school have become settled. A priority has been to bind together the whole school community with a sense of shared commitment. Thus, staff have been receptive to advice and opportunities to develop their professional skills. This is shown in records of the checks made on teachers' work and the targets set for them.
- Assessment of pupils' work is reliable. It shows that while in some classrooms less progress has been made than might be expected, it has improved in those classrooms since the inspection in

2011. This reflects some effective development of teachers' skills.

- Checks on pupils' progress has led to action to give expert coaching to older pupils who are falling behind. This has been successful in retrieving the situation. However, senior staff now know that there may be more efficient ways of assigning teaching duties in order to maximise progress, by making better use of each teacher's expertise.
  - The school is well regarded by parents and is full. However, a few families are not effective enough with getting younger children into school and avoiding taking them away in term time.
  - There is a good range and variety of learning opportunities, including visits and visitors coming into school. A very successful science day for Year 4 pupils was put on during the inspection by the secondary school. Pupils value the additional activities that are provided. The morning care club offers a wholesome, affordable, social setting. Pupils welcome opportunities to support causes such as the Macmillan cancer charity. They appreciate the equal opportunities that they all have to find success and value the diversity of backgrounds that their fellow pupils bring. Their personal development is a strength of the school.
  - The school is very well supported by the local authority. It looks to the authority for ongoing support with the improvement of teaching and taking action with parents on attendance.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is exceptionally well led by a Chair with extensive experience of governance. Governors are generous with their time and have welcomed training. They have a clear understanding of school and national data on pupils' progress. They are scrupulous with financial control; they make sure that pupil premium money is spent to good effect. They are properly included in considering the appraisal of the effectiveness of teachers' work and their pay. They ensure that policies and practice, including matters of safeguarding, meet all requirements. They attach great importance to the school's Catholic mission and are resolute in their determination to make it a highly effective school.
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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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119516
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	405866

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	257
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elaine Grimshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 May 2011
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