

St Patrick's Roman Catholic Primary School

Higher Walton Road, Walton-le-Dale, Preston, Lancashire, PR5 4HD

Inspection dates 27–28 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children get off to an outstanding start in their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Between Years 1 and 6 pupils achieve well. They make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good and some practice is outstanding. Lessons are lively and imaginative and provide very well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. All groups of pupils feel very safe and their parents unanimously agree with this.
- Senior leaders and governors provide good leadership. Because of this, the good quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, already in place before the headteacher's absence, did not falter but improved well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always set work in lessons that is at the right level of difficulty to help pupils to achieve the best they can.
- Pupils do not always have enough chances to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics have too few chances to check on the quality of teaching and marking in their subjects.
- Teachers do not have enough opportunities to share and learn from the outstanding practice which already exists in the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors checked school documents relating to safeguarding, looked at pupils' work in their books, heard some pupils read and reviewed the ways in which the school checks on pupils' learning.
- The inspectors took account of the 27 parental responses received at the time of the inspection from the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own parental survey and the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Louise Murphy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below average and in some year groups there are no pupils eligible for the funding. (This is extra government funding to support children of armed forces families, pupils who are looked after by the local authority, and pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals).
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has had a series of staffing absences, including the nine months absence of the substantive headteacher.
- During her absence, the school was led by the two assistant headteachers and, for one day each week an associate headteacher. From November 2012, the school was led by a second associate headteacher. The substantive headteacher returned to work full-time two days before the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that achievement is outstanding by ensuring that teachers:
 - always set work in lessons which is at the right level of difficulty to help pupils to achieve the best they can
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in all the subjects of the curriculum.
- Raise the quality of leadership and management to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics are provided with more opportunities
 - to check on the quality of teaching and marking in their subjects
 - there are more opportunities for teachers to share and learn from the outstanding practice which already exists in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills which are in-line with those typically expected for their age. Because adults plan exciting activities which capture children's interests very well, they make rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils achieve well and make at least good progress in their learning.
- Well-planned learning helps pupils to make outstanding progress in Years 1 and 2. Their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 has been significantly above average each year, except in 2012 when it was above average.
- Results in national tests in Year 6 since the previous inspection have generally been above average and in some years significantly so. Although results in English and mathematics dipped in 2012 from the significantly above average results evident in 2011, they were still above average. Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and the school's own tracking data show the dip has been reversed for current pupils.
- Rates of pupils' progress are good rather than outstanding in Years 3 to 6. Staffing disruptions, in the past, means that some pupils are still making up for lost learning and, in some lessons, levels of work are not always challenging enough. Furthermore, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to extend their literacy and mathematical skills in meaningful contexts in other subjects of the curriculum.
- High quality teaching of letter sounds from Reception onwards enables pupils to read very competently. Consequently, pupils in Year 1 achieved well above the national average in the reading test in 2012 and by Year 2 exceeded the expected levels.
- Inspection evidence shows that attainment in English and mathematics for the few pupils currently in school who are eligible for pupil-premium funding varies according to their starting points. However, there is evidence that where there are gaps, they are closing rapidly in English and mathematics and this group makes at least good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the staff in school support them really well and specialist external support is provided and carefully tailored to meet their individual needs.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' good progress and achievement are attributable to the good and, at times, outstanding teaching they receive. This view is strongly supported by parents and by pupils who say teachers make learning fun.
- Relationships are excellent. This creates a strong learning environment. It gives pupils the confidence to contribute ideas and participate effectively in lessons.
- Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and make outstanding progress, particularly when they are given the opportunity to work independently. This was observed in a Year 2 English lesson as pupils confidently and accurately used previously learnt punctuation and spelling skills to make notes about a children's author and to share their findings with each other and the class.
- In lessons observed that were less than outstanding, work was occasionally too hard or too easy for some pupils and so they did not make the progress they could. Furthermore, although pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills well, they do not always apply these skills across different subjects.
- Marking is generally very thorough. At its very best, it is a written dialogue between the pupil and teacher about what the next steps might be to improve. Pupils say that they find both the ongoing support in class and by working with small groups very helpful.
- The teaching of the pupils eligible for pupil-premium funding is managed well, with good use of specialist support staff. This ensures these pupils achieve well.

- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good because all adults, and particularly the skilled teaching assistants, ensure pupils receive appropriate help specific to their needs. As a result all pupils have equal opportunities and potential discrimination is tackled well.
- Teachers make a strong contribution to the outstanding provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Imaginative teaching and pupils' full participation in learning are integral to most lessons. For instance, Year 3 pupils developed these skills very well as they discussed and reflected, in groups and as a class, on the reasons for and the effects of, the destruction of the rain forests. Such lessons prepare them well for their future lives.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' exemplary behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning are outstanding. The words of one pupil sum this up, 'I can't live without our school.' he exclaimed. Parents fully agree with this view. They are very supportive of the school and raised no concerns about their children's well-being or safety.
- School records show that behaviour is typically excellent in classes, around the school and over time. Pupils' real enjoyment of school has a positive effect on their good achievement. Pupils respond well to the high expectations of staff. This results in outstanding behaviour in lessons, assemblies and break times. They make an exceptional contribution to their own learning.
- Systems for recording and for following up any incidents of misbehaviour are consistent and secure. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Instances of racism or bullying of any sort are extremely rare events.
- All groups of pupils feel safe and are acutely aware of what constitutes unsafe situations. They know how to keep themselves and others safe, including while using the internet. Pupils and staff receive training in e-safety.
- Pupils are very proud of belonging to the school. They say the '3Rs' of respect, responsibility and resilience are their guide. These are fully understood and lived out. When asked by an inspector for instance, what resilience meant, one pupil explained, 'It's keeping going when you want to give up.'
- Pupils enthusiastically welcome the numerous responsibilities given to them, such as being school councillors, playground buddies or indeed lunchtime leaders, who are required to undertake a hygiene test before taking up the responsibility.
- Members of the school council are highly committed to listening to and responding where they can, to the views of their classmates. They speak enthusiastically about the opportunities they have been given to choose resources such as those in the Reception outdoor area. Such roles enable them to learn to act responsibly and to support each other very well.
- Attendance is above average because the importance of going to school to learn is clearly explained to pupils and parents. Absence is followed up very rigorously.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and the breakfast and after-school clubs adults provide very good care for all the children who quickly learn to share equipment, take turns and to talk about what they are learning.

The leadership and management are good

- Key strengths are the good leadership and teamwork established by the substantive headteacher prior to her illness and continued by the two assistant headteachers, the associate headteacher and governors. This, together with high quality support from the diocese and the local authority enabled the school to continue to improve during the absence of the headteacher.
- Senior leaders work closely with other staff and identify actions that will improve the school further. Staff say that the training they receive helps them to improve their own and pupils'

performance. Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and targets set for teachers concentrate on raising pupils' achievement, and are well linked to training and to their salary progression.

- The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is regularly checked by these subject leaders. However, the role of leaders of other subjects is not so well developed. They have, for example, too few chances to check on the quality of teaching and marking in their subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and varied and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong, and show concern for others, for example, through links with a school in Zambia. Music, sports and learning to speak French and Spanish are strengths of the school. The choir, for instance, is busy preparing to join with local groups in the community to sing in a Celtic soul festival.
- Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and child-protection procedures fully meet statutory requirements. The strong partnerships which exist with local schools provide good opportunities for pupils and staff to share their expertise and learn from each other.
- Parents say they are well informed about the work of the school because of regular newsletters and the highly informative website.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and have received training to ensure that they have the necessary skills to carry out their roles, particularly during the headteacher's absence. They know the key strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are fully aware of how the pupils are achieving compared with other schools nationally. The headteacher is held to account with rigorous performance targets. Governors are fully aware of the performance of staff and their pay levels. In conjunction with the headteacher, they manage the school's finances efficiently, including the use of the pupil-premium money.

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	119640
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	403403

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J Cribben
Headteacher	K Gleave
Date of previous school inspection	11 October 2007
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