

Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Primary School, Brierfield

Halifax Road, Brierfield, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 5BL

Inspection dates

26–27 March 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.

- High levels of care and excellent spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development contribute to outstanding behaviour and safety.
- The vast majority of parents rate the school highly. A comment by one typifies the view of the vast majority. 'The school has super balance between focusing on academic attainment and wider achievement, providing a well-rounded education.'
- Children get a worthy start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress and develop good skills for future learning.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, good progress continues and standards rise to be above average overall and very high in reading.
- Good and, at times, outstanding teaching together with an imaginatively planned curriculum, give pupils great enjoyment and excellent attitudes. These contribute to above-average attendance.
- Regular checks on pupils' achievement mean that pupils usually have work that is just at the right level.
- The dedicated and skilled leadership of the headteacher, supported by an effective governing body, is a key factor in the school's success. A shared ambition amongst all staff drives the school forward. Staff are very well managed and training is tailored to improve their skills.
- The school is currently improving and is well placed to continue to do so in future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as good as English. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are not yet skilled enough in solving mathematical problems.
- Pupils are not helped enough to become independent learners. Not all understand how to improve their work and reach better standards. These two factors hold back progress, particularly for the more-able.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons.
- Meetings conducted with governors, staff, senior leaders, a representative from the local authority and a group of pupils broadened the information base gathered by the inspector.
- Evaluations of a range of school documentation added to inspection judgements. These included the details relating to safeguarding, the improvement plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and records of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The view of parents was secured by analysing 19 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). In addition, the inspector held a discussion with a group of parents at the start of the second day.
- An analysis of 12 staff questionnaires together with an on-going dialogue with teachers and teaching assistants gave the inspector an insight into the views of the staff.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is below average
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after). The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staff changes. Within the last eighteen months, new appointments include a new headteacher and deputy and a new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The school has gained an award for being a Healthy School and achieved an Eco award for promoting activities that develop positive attitudes to the environment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement for all pupils, but particularly the more-able ones, across the school by:
 - increasing pupils' understanding of how to improve their work to reach even higher standards
 - implementing strategies, consistently applied, to enable pupils to learn independently.
- Increase further, progress and attainment in mathematics in Years 1 to 6, by developing styles of teaching that deepen pupils' abilities to solve mathematical problems.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well throughout the school. From starting points that match expectations for their age, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage progress at a good and at times excellent rate. In the Reception class, children develop good personal and social skills, a secure understanding of reading, writing and mathematics and the confidence to make decisions and work with others. By the start of Year 1, standards are above average.
- In 2012, the results of the screening check for reading at Year 1 were better than the average nationally reflecting the good start the pupils get.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress. Unavoidable staff changes have led to some inconsistency in the rate of progress. Attainment at Year 2 has been consistently above average in each of the last five years in reading and writing and mostly above average in mathematics. At the end of Year 6, attainment is typically above average and progress from Year 2 is better than expected nationally.
- In 2012 there was a dip in attainment due to the nature of the cohort which had a high percentage of pupils with additional needs. While progress was rapid in reading and writing, it was slower in mathematics compared to previous years. Pupils have good skills of accurately solving number problems, but they are less secure in applying these skills to solve mathematical investigations. School leaders are making a determined effort to speed up progress and current data demonstrate that progress is now accelerating and standards are above average in English and mathematics. This year more pupils in Year 6 are set to gain standards that far exceed the expectations for their age in all subjects assessed. This was confirmed by lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and hearing pupils read.
- The number receiving the pupil premium grant is too small to form a reliable judgement about the relative performance of these pupils compared to those who do not receive the grant nationally. In 2012, within the school, individual pupils received extra support for reading, writing and mathematics and achieved as well as others.
- The school successfully adopts an inclusive approach. Learning resources are adapted to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have access to all aspects of the curriculum and achieve well.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is currently good with some that is outstanding. Excellent teamwork between teachers and a skilled team of teaching assistants ensures that the needs of all pupils are met.
- Most lessons move along with good pace. They are imaginative in their planning and promote amongst pupils a great enjoyment of learning. Staff regularly assess the existing knowledge and understanding of pupils in order to plan work to best meet each learner's needs. Throughout the school, reading is taught well. Good teaching of the sounds that letters make (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, contributes to pupils making rapid progress in reading across the school.
- In the best lessons, for example in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, pupils are stretched beyond their existing knowledge. Very practical activities promote debate between pupils and build a determination. Teachers are usually skilful at making sure that they set work that is hard enough for pupils of all abilities and is relevant to real life. This was seen in a Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson when pupils persevered to find a formula for a landscape gardener to calculate how many posts would be needed for a fence. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, young children are encouraged to make decisions and work independently within the context of topics such as Spring or a traditional story. Some were determined, for example, to add together accurately their beans as part of their topic based on, 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is particularly effective. Their learning is effectively supported by the skills of dedicated teaching assistants.
- Where lessons have less impact on learning, it is because pupils have too little scope to follow

their own interests or to think hard and explain their ideas. Expectations are not always high enough for pupils to apply their good basic skills of number to solve mathematical investigations in meaningful contexts across the curriculum. This hampers the progress of some, particularly the more-able. Very occasionally, pupils find work too easy because activities are not matched closely enough to their needs.

- Pupils have targets which help them know how to succeed in their work. Not all, however, understand how to reach the next level in their learning. Marking is regular. At its best, it gives pupils a clear picture of how well they have done and precise steps for improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour and safety are excellent. This judgement reflects the view of the vast majority of pupils and parents. Pupils are polite and very caring and benefit from excellent role models given by staff. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy school because they are adamant that their lessons are exciting and interesting.
- Excellent attitudes to learning contribute greatly to achievement. Pupils are naturally curious and enjoy taking on new ideas and learning new skills. They are determined to do well in their lessons, to work hard and present their work neatly. Pupils have great pride in their school; this is signified by their joy at representing it in sports events and as singers in the choir at the local school's music festival.
- Pupils are very aware of different types of bullying, including name-calling and cyber-bullying; they say that they feel safe at all times. Instances of poor behaviour are rare and racism is non-existent. Pupils are very clear about how to keep themselves safe in school and outside; for example, pupils understand about road safety. By visiting the life-education bus and participating in a variety of lessons in school promoting healthy lifestyles, pupils know the choices required to be healthy.
- Older pupils enjoy playing with and looking after younger children. Some have responsibilities as playground play leaders that help pupils to play well together and others are very keen on saving the planet as eco warriors. They are proud that all pupils get on very well together.
- Pupils feel that their views are valued. The school council is involved in planning school events, for example, the recent mathematics day. Staff consult with pupils regularly about the curriculum, for example their opinions about the school's approaches to reading, writing and mathematics.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a calm and very clear-sighted leader with a deep passion for the school. Shrewd, astute actions are securing a settled staff team, improving the quality of teaching and raising further pupils' achievement. Supported by an effective deputy headteacher, strong teamwork and high staff morale ensures that everyone works with a common purpose.
- There is a strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination and procedures for securing child protection are exemplary. Everyone is treated equally. Assessment, used very well, identifies pupils at risk of falling behind so that effective intervention helps them to catch up.
- Good procedures enable effective appraisals of the performance of teachers and teaching assistants. The expectations for teachers and pupils are increasing under the new headteacher based on the detailed reviews of the school's performance. As a result, pupils' good progress over recent years is maintained and accelerating. Senior leaders and governors give professional development a high profile; excellent partnerships with the local schools network as well as with the local authority, secure high quality training.
- The curriculum is focused on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics and as a result, standards are generally above average. The approach to the curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils benefit greatly from their participation in curriculum enrichment days, book weeks, special topic weeks and educational experiences. A recent visit to the Egyptian museum in

Manchester inspired pupils' learning in class.

- Parents are true partners in the school and their children's education. They receive high quality information and have many opportunities to give their opinions.
- The local authority works effectively with the school. It provides good support for the new leadership team and offers good guidance about how to improve the quality of teaching and secure the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- The governance of the school:
 - The governing body understand the school's strengths and where improvement is required. It interrogates the data about pupils' attainment in relation to other schools nationally. It raises questions relating to variations in standards between subjects, for example, in mathematics. It is not though, focused enough on comparing progress between different subjects. Governors make regular visits to the school to check on what goes on. This strengthens their ability to challenge and support the school. Wise spending of finances improve standards; for example, funds have recently boosted resources for computer technology and improvements made to aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Governors have a good understanding of how pupil premium funding is spent and its impact on pupils' attainment. Effective systems check on the performance of the headteacher, and also staff. The governing body ensure that safeguarding systems meet requirements. All checks on the suitability of staff are thorough. Training to ensure effective support and protection for pupils is up to date.

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	119652
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	403405

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
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Suzanne Barnes
Headteacher	Mary Lyle
Date of previous school inspection	11 December 2007
Telephone number	01282 613709
Fax number	01282 690319
Email address	head@holytrinityrc.lancs.sch.uk

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