

St Mary's and St Benedict's Roman Catholic Primary School

Brownedge Lane, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancashire, PR5 6TA

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

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.

- In the large majority of lessons, teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- Given their starting points, almost all pupils make good progress throughout the school, particularly in reading and writing.
- Pupils are polite and courteous, their behaviour is good and they are keen to learn.
- Pupils say they feel safe and are looked after well. This view is supported by the vast majority of parents.
- The curriculum offers a good and interesting range of subjects and topics that ensure pupils enjoy school. This contributes to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have been effective in improving teaching. They have a clear view of how successful the school can be and what needs to be done to improve it further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of teaching requires improvement and not enough teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers do not always plan activities well enough to ensure that all pupils consistently make rapid progress.
- The school does not use tracking and assessment data well enough to ensure that all pupils are fully challenged at all times.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work does not always help pupils to make the best possible progress. Teachers' written comments do not always clearly inform pupils what they need to do to improve and teachers do not always ensure that pupils have opportunities to respond to their comments.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by nine teachers. Two observations were conducted jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspectors looked closely at the school's work, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing and its improvement plan, documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding, minutes of the governing body meetings, the school's data on pupils' progress and work in pupils' books.
- The inspectors held meetings with three groups of pupils, staff, three members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), together with the 106 responses to a parental survey carried out by the school in November 2012 and informal conversations with parents.

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

Clare Daniel

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's and St Benedict's is a larger than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is slightly above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children of service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national averages.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of those supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- 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 achieved the Early Years Quality Mark award and the Lancashire Physical Education award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is always at least consistently good and much more is outstanding, to raise standards further, particularly in English and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that appropriate tasks and activities are always set that enable all pupils to make more rapid progress in their learning
 - ensuring that marking of pupils' work consistently provides clear and specific guidance on what they need to do to improve, and providing more opportunities for them to follow up teachers' comments.
- Make greater use of tracking and assessment data to ensure that all pupils are challenged and standards are raised.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Although typically most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are broadly in line with those typically expected for their age, a significant minority enter with skills that are below those expected for age in numeracy, communication, language and literacy and in their personal and emotional development. By the end of the Reception Year, the vast majority of children have developed skills that are securely in line with those typically expected for their age across all areas of learning, indicating good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced effective strategies to develop pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils are developing their reading, writing and mathematical skills well and the progress made by pupils between Years 1 and 6 is good.
- Currently, school data show that since September 2012 the proportions of pupils making more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics have increased significantly and are higher than is usually seen. This is confirmed by inspection evidence. Pupils' overall attainment is now at least as expected for age and improving rapidly.
- In 2012, the average points score for Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was above the national average in English and mathematics. As a result, the gaps in achievement between those pupils and those not eligible for free school meals are closing.
- There are no significant variations between the achievements of different groups of pupils over time. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic backgrounds receive effective additional support. This has enabled them to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills well.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who are eligible for pupil premium funding make similar, and sometimes better, progress than their peers.
- The support given by the school to different groups of pupils shows the school's commitment to offering equality of opportunity to all pupils and ensures that they achieve well.
- Lesson observations, hearing pupils read and inspectors' checks on pupils' work confirm that currently pupils are making good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics. Parents are accurate in their positive views that their children are receiving a good education.

The quality of teaching is good

- In the best lessons, where sometimes outstanding teaching was seen, teaching is very well organised and planned. Teachers have high expectations, explain the work well and use effective questioning that encourages pupils to think for themselves. They use resources and set activities that carefully match the interests and needs of individual and groups of pupils well. Learning takes place at a good rate with timed activities keeping pupils focused on their work.
- In some lessons, teachers do not always set activities and tasks that enable all pupils to learn well enough. This is because the work is either too hard or too easy for some pupils and, as a result, pupils do not make more rapid progress.
- The whole-school reading programme is very effective. It is helping to develop pupils' literacy skills by linking writing skills to their guided reading.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked with the majority of written comments using praise to encourage. However, teachers do not always provide pupils with clear and specific written comments on what they need to do to improve. When teachers' comments do tell pupils what they need to do to improve, they are not always followed up by pupils because they do not have sufficient opportunities to do their corrections or to complete work.
- Teaching assistants form very good relationships with teachers and pupils. They are used very

effectively and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those pupils who need extra help. As a result, these pupils make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. They are polite, well mannered and courteous toward each other and to adults and visitors.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the rewards and sanctions system and say that it has helped to improve behaviour further, particularly during lunchtime. They value 'golden time' and can earn house points for good work or good behaviour.
- The relationships between pupils and teachers and between pupils themselves are good and promote positive attitudes to learning. This enables pupils to work well together or to get on sensibly with their work by themselves. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and are taught and learn well.
- Pupils say they feel safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. They have a clear understanding of the different forms of bullying and say that bullying is rare. They report that when any instances of bullying do occur they are quickly resolved. Pupils also learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, they learn about road safety, how to use the internet safely and learn how to swim.
- Effective partnerships with parents and external agencies ensure that pupils who display any cause for concern are identified early and this ensures that appropriate support is provided. The school's support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable is very effective.
- The responses to Parent View and to the parental survey carried out by the school indicate that a very large majority of parents agree that pupils behave well in school, that their children are well cared-for, are not bullied and feel safe at school.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils to make a good contribution to the life of the school and to help others. For example, some pupils take on positions of responsibility, such as prefects, librarians, house captains and members of the school council. Year 6 pupils are involved in school broadcasts and helps develop their confidence and speaking skills. These broadcasts provide news, thoughts for the day and prayers, and offer all pupils the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences.
- Pupils work hard to help others by raising money for charities such as St Joseph's Penny, Cafod and Red Nose Day and have raised over £7,500 for the Logan North Appeal to help support a pupil with cancer. The school has also funded water equipment for people in Chembakolli, a village in India. These activities, together with the school's Christian ethos, contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Attendance is above the national average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and know what the school needs to do to improve further. There is a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching to raise standards further. However, the use of pupils' tracking and assessment data is not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all pupils make the best possible progress.
- The school's systems for regular observations of lessons to monitor the quality of teaching are good and provide teachers with accurate feedback on their performance. This information is used well to plan how best to support and encourage further training opportunities for staff and to advise the governing body about teachers' pay awards.

- The school has systems in place to check regularly on pupils' progress. Pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are quickly identified and additional support is provided.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet pupils' interests and provides opportunities for pupils to develop a wide range of skills. The school provides a variety of activities to enrich pupils' experiences, such as the trips to Blackpool Zoo as part of their Rainforest topic work, to Hoghton to learn about the Tudors and to the museum of Lancashire to learn about the Second World War. Pupils also learn about life in other countries. For example, through the school's links to other schools in Norway and Ghana.
- The curriculum and the wide range of activities and opportunities offered to the pupils support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school has benefited from very effective and valuable support from the local authority to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well and has identified areas for improvement. Governors regularly check the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, and use performance management systems to set appropriate and challenging targets to tackle any underperformance. However, monitoring and evaluation of the school's data are not yet rigorous enough to enable them to ask questions and provide greater challenge and support to school leaders to drive improvement more rapidly. Governors have a good understanding of the school's finances and ensure that funding for those eligible for the pupil premium is effectively allocated. This includes providing additional staffing and resources to help improve the literacy and mathematical skills of pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Safeguarding procedures and policies meet statutory requirements.

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	119704
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	405881

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	274
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Swindlehurst
Headteacher	Anne Hardisty
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2011
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