

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Oswaldtwistle

Mayfield Avenue, Oswaldtwistle, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 3AA

Inspection dates 15–16 May 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| 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 | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Pupils make good progress from starting points that are below expectations for their age.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is well organised so that pupils make a good start to reading and writing.
- Teaching and the indoor and outdoor environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved since the previous inspection. Children now get off to a good start with their learning.
- A range of one-to-one and small group sessions ensure that pupils' different needs are well met.
- The school's mission is, 'To Live, Learn and Grow together with Jesus.' This is achieved through good relationships and a warm and nurturing atmosphere.
- Pupils behave well, work hard and feel safe. They apply themselves conscientiously and enjoy learning because 'lessons are fun'.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Leaders, managers and governors have ensured that the school continues to improve and this has resulted in better teaching and rising pupils' achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils can make outstanding progress.
- In some classes pupils do not always get the guidance they need to improve their work or sufficient time to correct and edit it.
- Teaching assistants are not always well deployed across the whole lesson to support pupils' learning.
- Occasionally, teachers expect pupils to get on with their work without showing them exactly what they need to do and this slows the pace of learning.
- Teachers do not consistently adjust their teaching during lessons to meet the needs of all learners.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons, two being joint observations with the headteacher, visited sessions taken by teaching assistants and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school staff and a representative of the local authority. A telephone conversation took place with the acting headteacher of Hendon Brook Short Stay School.
- The inspectors took account of 32 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 140 responses to a parental questionnaire distributed by the school. They also considered 22 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. The inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stefan Lord

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's is an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from services families and those children that are looked after.)
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- An average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection including members of the senior leadership team.
- The school works in partnership with Hendon Brook Short Stay School to provide for the needs of dual registered pupils.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good and outstanding to drive progress at an even faster rate by:
 - adjusting teaching during lessons to rectify misconceptions and provide further challenge
 - demonstrating what pupils have to do to allow lessons to move on at a swift pace and keep pupils' attention
 - ensuring that the skills of teaching assistants are well used throughout the whole lesson
 - making sure that marking consistently shows pupils the next steps to take to improve their work and that pupils are given the time to act upon this guidance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start Reception class with skills below those typically expected. There have been improvements made to the quality of teaching and the learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage over the past two years. As a result, pupils now join Year 1 with the skills expected for their age having made good progress relative to their starting point.
- The 2012 Key Stage 1 results show that attainment is improving overall and is now broadly average. This is good progress because pupils, including the current Year 2, started Key Stage 1 at below age-related expectations.
- The end of Key Stage 2 2012 test results show attainment in reading and writing has improved and attainment in English is now significantly above that of other pupils nationally. Attainment in mathematics is broadly average but the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level was particularly low. The school leadership team have recognised this and the introduction of small group support activities to meet the needs of individual pupils is making sure that progress is now accelerating. Approximately one third of pupils are expected to attain at the higher levels in mathematics this year.
- The proportion of pupils making expected and better-than-expected progress in English was above national levels. The proportions of pupils making expected progress in mathematics also compared well with national figures though the proportion making better than expected progress did not. Pupils are currently making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Pupils are well supported by teaching assistants in small groups and on a one-to-one basis. However, teaching assistants are not always so well deployed when the teacher is addressing the whole class.
- In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals attained at levels above similar pupils nationally and the same as other pupils in school in English. However, in mathematics attainment was just below similar pupils nationally and one term behind other pupils in school. Tracking data show that gaps between pupils supported by the pupil premium funding and others are closing. This confirms the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching, including the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics, has improved since the current headteacher took up her post. Teaching is good which is helping pupils to make good progress.
- In the best lessons teachers question pupils carefully to assess their understanding and use the school's assessment information to plan lessons that challenge all pupils in the class. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers and pupils know what they are expected to achieve because the learning objective is clear.
- When appropriate, teachers often demonstrate how to do something so that pupils can confidently get on with their task. For example, the Year 6 teacher explained and demonstrated the differences between writing direct and indirect speech and pupils could then get on quickly. However, in a few lessons the rate of learning slows because teachers do not always model to pupils what they are going to do and they are then unsure of how to get on with their work.
- During one Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson the teacher recognised that pupils had firmly grasped how to add two numbers by counting on from the larger number and quickly stepped in to provide additional challenge. On another occasion the teacher noticed that some pupils had misunderstood how to use a timeline correctly. He asked a confident pupil to explain the appropriate method which enabled other pupils to get on with the challenge. A small number of

teachers do not adjust their teaching as effectively.

- Teachers consistently congratulate pupils on what they have achieved when marking work. However, they do not always give guidance to pupils on what to do to improve their work. Furthermore, pupils are not always given the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments.
- Matching letters and sounds is taught well to younger pupils, and older pupils are regularly taught to read in small groups. Each class has a range of books and a comfortable reading area as staff see it is important to encourage a love of reading.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to plan effective support for pupils, particularly those who are not expected to meet their targets, disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Those who spoke to inspectors agreed that they like their teachers because 'they make learning fun'.
- Pupils are polite and courteous, holding doors for each other and welcoming visitors. During the inspection they behaved well, showing respect for each other and the adults around them. Pupils say that this is typical behaviour at St Mary's, especially since the red and yellow card system has been introduced to improve behaviour. Occasionally, when pupils are unsure of what is expected of them, lessons do not move on swiftly enough and a few pupils can become distracted from their learning. However, a gentle reminder from the teacher brings them quickly back to task.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying and name-calling. They are adamant that these things do not happen in their school and confident that if they had any problems an adult would listen to them and help them to resolve their issues quickly. Moreover, their friends would also listen because they 'want to help each other'.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are very aware that the new fencing has stopped anyone coming onto the school field when they should not be there. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are well looked after.
- Older pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility such as developing the 'seeds and gardeners' partnership with younger friends to help them to find their way around school and have someone to play with. Older pupils value this experience and feel that it helps them to become more confident.
- The eco-council is very busy within the school and the local community. Members have committed to eating only Fairtrade Easter eggs and cleaned up the local stream. Their efforts also extend to helping children in other countries. The council has organised the recycling of old clothes to buy equipment for a school in Africa, because they are aware that they themselves 'sometimes take things for granted' and others are not so fortunate.
- Attendance is above average and reflects how much pupils enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has the full confidence and support of the whole staff who share her clear view of how successful the school can be. Together they work as a strong team. Improvement in pupils' progress and to the quality of teaching confirms the ability of school leaders to continue to drive improvements.
- School leaders including subject leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching. As a result, the training and support provided to staff are now well matched to school priorities and individuals' developmental needs. The headteacher makes sure that teachers are accountable for the

progress of pupils in their class and effective performance by teachers is rewarded by progression through the pay scales.

- The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. Literacy and numeracy skills are practised across other subjects. There is a strong and successful emphasis throughout the school on developing excellent personal skills, including pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The curriculum is further enriched by after-school activities and school visits.
- Pupil premium funding has been allocated principally to increase staffing. School leaders including governors know that they must make sure actions taken are helping pupils eligible for the grant. Gaps in attainment between those eligible and those who are not were narrowed between 2011 and 2012 in English and mathematics. The good progress made by all groups demonstrates the school's successful commitment to equal opportunities.
- The local authority provides a good level of support to the school, giving advice to the headteacher to secure improved teaching and the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage environment.
- School leaders work effectively with the local short-stay school to meet the needs of pupils requiring specialist support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the strengths and priorities of the school including the quality of teaching. They are kept well informed by the headteacher and visit the school as often as they can. Governors engage in training and are committed to improving their understanding of school performance data, so that they can challenge and support the school even more effectively. They keep a careful check on how pupil premium funding is spent and the difference that it makes to eligible pupils. Statutory duties, including financial and safeguarding requirements, are fulfilled.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 119660 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 411747 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| 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 | 240 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr David Joyce |
| Headteacher | Mrs Lesley Pemberton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 26 January 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01254 231278 |
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