

# St Richard's Catholic Primary School, Skelmersdale

Sandy Lane, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 8LQ

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- This highly successful school fully lives out its mission as a 'caring, family community'.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle very quickly and make outstanding progress from their individual starting points. This is because of exceptional partnerships established with parents and adults in the 'wrap-around' provision.
- Between Years 1 and 6, pupils' achievement is outstanding. They make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- All adults have very high expectations of all pupils and relationships are exceptional.
- Even though teaching is outstanding overall, teachers do not always ensure high quality marking, to help pupils to improve their learning, is applied in all subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils say, and their parents fully agree, that they feel completely safe.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons. The curriculum provides extremely well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Exceptional leadership at all levels, including the governors, creates a community of like-minded leaders who never settle for less than the best, not only for pupils in this school, but also for pupils in the many other schools it supports.
- This continued drive to improve ensures teaching and pupils' achievement are outstanding.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the Catholic diocese of Liverpool.
- Inspectors examined the school's own documentation relating to pupils' progress, school self-evaluation and policies relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from Years 1 and 2 read and spoke informally to pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors took account of 47 responses to the on-line Parent View questionnaire; the schools' own parental survey and also spoke informally to groups of parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors took account of the 31 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Clare Henderson, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Eithne Proffitt	Additional Inspector
Gillian Salter-Smith	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is 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 proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is 'wrap-around' provision including breakfast and after-school clubs that is not managed by the school and subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.
- It is a partner in the Shares Consortium, developing collaborative learning activities with other schools and providing initial teacher training.

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

- Ensure that teachers always apply high quality marking, to help pupils to improve their learning, in all subjects of the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age and well below those expected in their language and personal development. Excellent use of role play, particularly in the highly creative outdoor environment, ensures children make rapid progress from their individual starting points, in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils continue to make rapid progress across the school. Results in national tests in Key Stages 1 and 2 have been consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics since the last inspection. Senior leaders are fully aware that, although pupils in the school did exceptionally well in reading and writing in the national tests in 2012, not quite as many reached the higher levels in mathematics.
- School leaders successfully addressed this matter by presenting pupils with further challenging mathematic activities. As a result, the proportion of pupils on track to achieve the higher levels 5 and 6, in the current Year 6, is well above the national average.
- Furthermore, pupils in Years 1 to 6 are currently making consistently good or outstanding progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Exceptionally well planned teaching of letters and sounds and the involvement of parents in this from when their children start school ensures reading skills develop rapidly. Consequently, by Year 2, most pupils have exceeded the expected levels.
- Pupils develop their reading skills well as they move up through school. They are keen to share their love of reading with the inspectors. One girl said 'my favourite author is William Shakespeare and I loved reading Romeo and Juliet.'
- Careful and targeted use of pupil premium money has been very successful. These pupils do better than similar groups nationally. The small gap in achievement between their levels and those of their classmates is closing rapidly in all classes. This shows that all pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed in their learning.
- The school uses a wide range of support, including small-group and one-to-one activities, to ensure pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs receive well-managed support. They make excellent progress from their individual starting points.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The high proportion of outstanding teaching is key to pupils' outstanding achievement.
- Consistently high quality teaching across all the different types of teaching, for example, highly imaginative play in the outdoor Early Years Foundation Stage and vibrant class lessons in Years 1 to 6, ensures that pupils' needs are met exceedingly well.
- All adults have extremely high expectations for all pupils. Relationships and mutual respect between pupils and adults are exemplary. This creates an exceptionally strong learning environment which gives pupils the confidence to present their ideas and participate very effectively in lessons.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. Adults continually create exciting opportunities for children to explore and investigate developing excellent skills of independence, speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics from an early age.
- Lessons are carefully planned to meet the learning needs of pupils of all abilities. All teachers use a wide variety of techniques effectively to fully engage all pupils. Drama, group work, practical tasks and opportunities for research through regular homework all contribute to pupils' excellent learning and enjoyment.
- Excellent use of 'fix it' time is a common feature at the start of lessons. At this time, pupils address any misconceptions encountered in the previous lesson. Marking at its very best is a written dialogue between the pupil and teacher about what the next steps might be to improve.

However, this is not always applied in all subjects of the curriculum.

- Teaching assistants work very effectively alongside class teachers. They provide seamless and valuable support both in class and working with small groups and individuals.
- Very rigorous checking of pupils' learning leads to very effective teaching of specific skills. This enables pupils, especially those who are disabled or have special educational needs, to quickly overcome a specific problem and move on more speedily.
- The teaching of the pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is outstanding. Teachers and support staff ensure these pupils achieve extremely well.
- Central to all learning is the high focus adults give to fostering pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding. This underpins all learning with frequent reminders about how to work together, value and think about individual differences and to understand one another's needs.

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

- Pupils' behaviour observed by inspectors in both lessons and around the school is outstanding. This has an extremely positive effect on pupils' outstanding achievement.
- Most parents fully agree with this view and are very happy with the high level of care and support provided and they are generally very pleased with standards of behaviour at the school.
- Pupils very much enjoy school and have excellent attitudes to learning. The respect and care they show for their classmates who are disabled or who have difficulties in learning is inspirational.
- School records show that behaviour is typically excellent around the school and over time. There are very few incidents of poor behaviour. In discussion, pupils were certain that bullying is rare and, when it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly by the teachers. They clearly understood the various forms bullying might take but were equally sure it was not part of life at their school.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and willingly take part in a wide range of activities which allow them to present their opinions and bring about change. School councillors, representatives on the pupil parliament and peer mediators are examples of these opportunities.
- All groups of pupils feel very 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.
- Attendance is above average and continues to improve rapidly because the importance of going to school to learn is clearly explained to pupils and parents. Absence is followed up very rigorously and leave from school during term time is not authorised.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, care and welfare are exemplary. The children share equipment very happily, take turns and are happy to talk about their learning. Extremely strong links with parents and opportunities such as the letter and sounds sessions strengthen these partnerships and children's confidence and enjoyment of school very well.

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- The school is exceptional well led by the headteacher and senior leaders. Together with the governing body, they check to make sure their plans for improvement are working and enjoy the full support of staff, who say 'this is a very happy place to work.'
- Senior leaders rigorously check the quality of teaching. Targets set for teachers concentrate on raising pupils' achievement, and are well linked to training needs.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Well planned opportunities to reflect upon a wide range of religions and cultures are very strongly promoted. Pupils' learning and enjoyment of school is greatly enriched by residential visits, sports, artistic opportunities, clubs and activities.
- Excellent partnerships exist with the local authority, the local school consortium and the diocese who work closely with the school, drawing upon the school's outstanding leadership and

excellent quality of teaching to support many other schools.

- Excellent links with adults in the 'wrap around' provision provides children with a seamless transition into school.
- Senior leaders and all adults have strong relationships with parents. Parents say they are well informed about the work of the school because of regular newsletters and the highly informative website. As a result, most parents are very supportive of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are fully involved in the process of checking on the quality of teachers' performance, including the headteacher, holding leaders to account for how well pupils are learning and setting clear targets for improvement. They ensure that pay rewards for teachers are carefully linked to outcomes for pupils. Governors have an excellent knowledge, as a result of the training they have undertaken, of the school's strengths and areas of pupils' learning which need to improve further. Safeguarding and child protection procedures meet statutory requirements and members of the governing body carry out regular checks to make sure that pupils are kept fully safe. In conjunction with the headteacher, the school's finances are reviewed regularly and managed very well by governors and the highly effective School Business Manager. Governors have used the extra pupil premium funding wisely to employ support staff to work with pupils who are at risk of falling behind in their learning.

## 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>	119684
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	412406

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>	Mr P Rowen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M Holden
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2006
<b>Telephone number</b>	01695 722346
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