

# Penwortham, St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Stanley Grove, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 0JH

## Inspection dates

12–13 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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

- By Year 6, standards are high in reading and mathematics and pupils have made strong progress. In writing, standards are average and progress is adequate.
- Children make rapid progress in the Reception Year. Assessments at age seven show standards that are consistently above average, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Effective development of the links between letter patterns and sounds (phonics) rapidly promotes fluency in reading. With fluency, pupils quickly learn to pick up information and grasp what a text is driving at. Occasionally, a pupil achieves a level for reading that is achieved by only a tiny number nationally (Level 6).
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding, particularly for Reception children. Teachers generally plan lessons well and have high expectations. Teachers give a good deal of time and thought to marking pupils' work.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are very well mannered, considerate of one another and keen to learn. Their written work is very neat and their diligence in lessons is exemplary. They take pride in their work, their school and themselves. They staunchly uphold Catholic values.
- The school is well led and managed. Pupils' good achievement has been sustained though there have been significant changes in staffing. Improvements have been made since the previous inspection. The headteacher has the vigorous support of staff at all levels. Morale in the school is high and staff are keen to give of their best. Parents strongly support the school and its work.
- Governance is excellent. Governors have a thorough grasp of how things stand in the school. They are knowledgeable and undertake their duties with sensitivity and rigour.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Writing is weaker than reading and mathematics throughout the school.
- Though many pupils achieve a high level in mathematics, the most able are not as confident and independent as they could be.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 lessons, and all teachers were seen. Two lessons had shared observations with the headteacher. In addition, short sessions with small groups were observed.
- Meetings were held with seven members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also held meetings with senior and middle leaders and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included pupils' work in the current year and previous years, the school's recent and previous national assessment results, information on pupils' progress, the school's evaluation of its own performance and improvement plans. Records on provision for those pupils who need additional support, safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- Inspectors took account of 80 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), two letters from parents, a parent's telephone call and the view of half a dozen parents as they brought children to school. There were 27 questionnaires completed by staff.

## Inspection team

Jim Bennetts, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Adrian Francis	Additional Inspector
David Halford	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. None are learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium (additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority, known to be eligible for free school meals or whose parents are in the armed service) is very low, with none in some year groups .
- The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at the level known as 'school action' is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at 'school action plus', or with a statement of special educational needs, is also below average.
- The school has met the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school was inspected in the second week of the autumn term. In nine of the 11 classes the teacher was new to the roll; several teachers were new to the school, some were covering temporary absences, two are newly qualified.

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

- Raise attainment in writing so that pupils' achievement in writing becomes at least good by:
  - embedding recently introduced strategies that provide pupils with opportunities to correct and improve their writing by acting on advice that clearly identifies strengths, errors and weaknesses
  - giving greater emphasis to the correction of spelling and punctuation whenever writing is underway, no matter what the main intention of the activity might be
  - providing opportunities for substantial re-drafting of pieces of writing to enable pupils to refine use of vocabulary, phrasing and style.
- Raise achievement for the most able in mathematics (typically half a dozen in each year group), and promote independent thinking, by:
  - more strongly developing mental methods alongside secure written procedures
  - encouraging pupils to devise their own strategies and select strategies from alternatives
  - expecting them to identify patterns for themselves
  - putting them under obligation to take risks in their thinking as they tackle new challenges.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children have generally joined Reception with levels of development above what is expected for their age. However, the school has found that with those starting school more recently, there has been less capability with communication skills and has adapted the curriculum to take account of this trend. Planning in the classes with Reception children now promotes rapid progress and, after a year in school, children are exceeding expected levels of development, including with communication skills.
- Records show that there has been consistently good progress in recent years in Key Stage 1: an improvement since the previous inspection. However, at age seven, relative weakness in writing is already evident.
- Usually, by the time they leave school, the majority of pupils have reached a high standard (Level 5) in reading and mathematics. Nearly all pupils reach or exceed the nationally expected standard (Level 4) in reading, writing and mathematics. There was a little slippage in outcomes at high level (Level 5) in 2013. There is a dearth of high levels in writing and throughout Key Stage 2 writing is not as strong as it might be.
- The more-able pupils (about a dozen in each year group) show imagination in their creative writing. They often choose the right style and the right words for their purpose. Handwriting is generally good. However, middle- and higher-ability pupils are weaker in spelling and punctuation than might be expected in relation to other indications of their ability. While phonics sessions have accelerated reading fluency, spelling is sometimes confused as pupils try to set down what they have heard, or misheard: for example, houer, colclusion, graverty, steyd. Pupils leave proof-reading slips, for example with capital letter conventions and syntax. The more able older pupils are unsure about the use of commas. This is sometimes associated with unnecessarily striving to use conjunctions or connective phrases within a sentence. In such situations, style can become convoluted.
- Mathematics is developed effectively with neat and detailed notation as pupils set out their working on paper. Pupils rapidly grasp written procedures, which are explained with clarity by teachers. In early Year 5, for example, all pupils still head columns with 'hundreds, tens, units'. However, some of the most-able pupils (about half a dozen in each year group) are not as nimble as they might be in dealing with mental challenges that are not related to the immediate work in hand. They tend to think in terms of the written strategies. Some are reluctant to try identifying new patterns, though they are capable of making inferences with their current work.
- High standards are evident in subjects across the curriculum, including history, music and sport. In music and physical education, pupils participate with skill and enthusiasm.
- The very few pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium generally do at least as well as others. Funding for their benefit is spent appropriately. Those who are disabled or have special educational needs are well looked after and make good progress.

### The quality of teaching is good

- In almost all lessons seen teaching was good or better; in several lessons pupils benefited from outstanding teaching. Teachers prepare lessons carefully. There is an appropriate variety of activities and pupils are generally moved on with appropriate pace. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort and they require their work to be neatly presented.
- Pupils themselves make a strong contribution to learning. They are unfailingly conscientious, attentive, cooperative and keen to please their teachers. They take a pride in their work, value the advice that teachers give and make earnest effort with correcting errors. They have a good understanding of the levels they have achieved and what is required to enable them to reach a higher level.

- A new approach to the marking of writing involves detailed identification of strengths and specific pointers for correction of errors. Teachers across the age range are putting in an impressive amount of time with this and pupils appreciate it. This strategy is entirely appropriate, though onerous.
- The approach to tracking pupils' progress is detailed, accurate and underpins teachers' well focused lesson planning.
- The school has a very good library. Its effective management and eager use engender avid reading.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities and stimulus for writing, including opportunities in subjects such as science and history. They get successful spurs to embark on imaginative writing. Where writing is underway, teachers generally have a specific intention – for instance to encourage use of 'strong verbs' or more diverse adjectives. However, in the course of such activities, there is sometimes less attention to spelling and punctuation than there could be. Though pupils are now required to make corrections to sentences and sometimes paragraphs, there is insufficient attention to substantial re-drafting. So, pupils do not get enough chance to play with different words and phrasing and evaluate alternatives.
- While mathematics teaching is rigorous and successful, the most-able half dozen in each year group are not pushed sufficiently to break new ground for themselves. They are too attached to formal methods and are not encouraged sufficiently to explore possibilities by informed guesswork.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, those who are disabled, or with special educational needs and those entitled to pupil premium are provided for well. Teaching assistants liaise closely with teachers and are skilled in the work they do.

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

- Pupils across the age range are well mannered; older pupils conduct themselves with perfect courtesy and consideration for others. Behaviour in lessons is above reproach. Pupils concentrate well, listen carefully and are unfailingly compliant. They are thorough in their work and the more able can show initiative. Attendance is high.
- The atmosphere about the school is laudably civilised and caring. Youngsters have social skills beyond their years. They know how thoughtless words can be hurtful and appreciate that friends can 'fall-out' and 'make up' again. They know the forms that bullying can take and say that it is never a feature of life at St Teresa's. School records show that any unpleasant incidents are exceptionally rare. Parents attest to this.
- At the start-of-year Mass, older pupils read texts or managed computer resources with aplomb. Participation by older pupils in the Communion was exceptionally high. They sang *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* with palpable exuberance.
- Pupils participate enthusiastically in the wealth of additional activities; *ju-jitsu* players are eager to 'get the next belt'. Older pupils value opportunities to take responsibility, for example by helping those younger than themselves. The school council is able to influence significant decisions. By Year 6 they have common sense about interaction with others: a Blackburn Rovers' supporter knows to keep quiet about it in Bolton! However, mature though pupils are, some older pupils are still accompanied by an adult as they come to school. Some hanker for more opportunity to learn the ways of the streets for themselves. With wistful humour, a Year 6 boy remarked, 'I'll not be allowed out by myself till I'm 21!'

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher and her senior colleagues lead the school with sensitivity and a determination to provide the best education for pupils. The school has overcome shortcomings that were noted

at the previous inspection. The headteacher calls for major commitment on the part of staff at all levels; she has their unanimous loyalty and can rely on their unstinting dedication to the work of the school. Despite staff changes, shrewd appointments and effective management have ensured that good quality of provision has been maintained. While there was some ambivalence at the time of the previous inspection, parents are now exceptionally supportive.

- There are effective procedures for logging pupils' progress and for intervention where necessary. The work that staff do is monitored and guided thoughtfully. The pay-progression of staff is properly linked to the quality of their work. The deployment of staff and the development of policies, for instance with marking, are reviewed with careful reflection. The school is painfully aware of the need to improve writing and has already taken well judged action. Its judgement of how well it is doing is accurate.
- The school's leaders and staff, over a long span of time, have cultivated an exceptionally positive ethos. All within the school are valued and encouraged. Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are given good opportunities for success. Any hint of discrimination is anathema.
- The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities in the classroom. A strength of the school is its extensive range of additional activities, which include cross-stitch, zumba dancing and a wealth of sports. The school has considered carefully how best to apply the funding shortly to be available for enhancing sports opportunities. The school attaches foremost importance to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The programme of visits and visitors is full, varied and apposite.
- The school is well supported by the local education authority, including with the auditing of assessments. The authority's advisers have a securely based understanding of how things stand in the school and provide valued support.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is excellent. Governors are very generous with their time. They bring impressive skill and knowledge to their work and make every effort to evaluate available data and information for themselves. They are often in school and most have useful links to particular aspects of the school's work. Governors have taken significant initiative in fostering the consultative involvement of parents in forward planning. The governing body ensures that earmarked funding, for instance for pupil premium pupils or for sport, is prudently applied, and they check outcomes. Safeguarding meets all requirements. Governors have appropriate oversight of the pay-progression of staff and there are sensible procedures for setting the headteacher's objectives. Governors are unflinching in holding the school to account; their perceptive vigilance and wisdom make an outstanding contribution to the school's effectiveness.

## 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>	119699
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	427381

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	277
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brenda Holt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Bleasdale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 742331
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