

St Malachy's Catholic Primary School

Furness Place, Illingworth, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX2 8JY

Inspection dates 24–25 September 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.

- Most pupils make at least expected progress and many make even better progress, particularly in English, reading and mathematics.
- Most teaching is good and some is outstanding. This is due to the strong leadership of teaching and learning and the commitment of the teaching and the support staff to continually improve their practice.
- Standards have risen rapidly for over a year and current data show this trend of improvement is continuing in every key stage, helped by the now full complement of staff.
- Behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe and very well cared for. A group of pupils explained that 'Adults in school know us very well and they are always there for us.'
- Relationships are first rate. Adults treat pupils with a great deal of courtesy and respect and pupils in turn model this behaviour with each other as well as with adults in school.
- The school provides a very nurturing environment and supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well.
- Senior leaders set high expectations and give the school clear direction for the future. They are supported and held to account by an effective governing body.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is still some teaching that requires improvement. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is slower and learning activities are sometimes too easy or too difficult for some of the pupils.
- Pupils make slower progress in writing, than in English, reading and mathematics because not all pupils have clear enough guidance on how to improve their writing further.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons and made several other short visits to lessons to observe teaching and learning.
- They scrutinised pupils' work, observed break times and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, school staff, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A number of documents were examined. They included the school's view of its own performance, records of the checks made on teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 15 responses on the online questionnaire (Parent View), analysed the school's own questionnaires and had several informal discussions with parents.
- Inspectors analysed responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire about the school.

Inspection team

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|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Fiona Gowers, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Prydwen Elfed-Owens | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen since the previous inspection and is now broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. However, the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, come from armed forces families and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Most of the school's senior leaders and teaching staff have changed since the last inspection. The headteacher was appointed in September 2012.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is much greater than that found nationally.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - matching more precisely learning activities to the needs of all pupils
 - increasing how quickly pupils learn in all lessons
 - ensuring more pupils make better than expected progress in every class.
- Boost pupils' progress in writing by ensuring pupils consistently receive clear enough guidance on how to structure and improve their writing and that they are given time to act upon the feedback and marking provided.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Most pupils start school with skills that are well below those expected for their age. Pupils settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop positive attitudes to learning. The older children make particularly rapid progress because of the extremely well-structured and supportive learning environment.
- Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. Attainment initially dropped at Key Stage 2 following the last inspection during a period with a significant number of leadership and staffing changes. However, attainment rose significantly from 2012 to 2013, particularly in English, reading and mathematics and continues to do so throughout school.
- Although pupils have more opportunities to write in different subjects, progress in writing has not been as fast as in mathematics, English and reading.
- Levels of attainment are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. However, standards fluctuate a little, particularly in Key Stage 2, because of a much larger than average proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at other than the usual times. However, lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and their progress records show that such pupils also make good progress relative to their starting points.
- Many pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make. Most pupils are developing into confident and enthusiastic readers by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6.
- School leadership's actions to improve the mathematics curriculum have paid dividends. In national tests and assessments in 2013, most of the pupils attained the expected level and 10% of the pupils attained a level that was significantly much higher than this.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well for different groups so they all do equally well. The school successfully fosters good relationships, helps tackle discrimination and provides support to help prevent pupils from falling behind in their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress relative to their starting points because of the well-targeted support provided.
- In most classes, additional learning and pastoral support have helped to close previous gaps in the relative attainment in English and mathematics of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium and other pupils in school. The school carefully checks the impact of the funding. Indeed, some pupils eligible for the pupil premium are now attaining more highly than many other pupils in their class.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who are new to learning English settle quickly into school and they say they are made to feel very welcome. The school carefully checks what each pupil knows, understands and can do and many of these pupils make rapid progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Most teaching observed during the inspection was of good quality and one third was outstanding. As a result, the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is increasing.
- A scrutiny of the work in pupils' books from this year and last year and the school's records of the checks made on teaching indicate that the quality of teaching seen by inspectors is typical.
- In the better lessons, teachers have high expectations and check that every task builds on what pupils already know. As a result, the work set helps pupils to learn well, whatever their ability. Pupils learn quickly because their interest is maintained through a variety of fast-paced activities.
- For example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, a group of children were fully absorbed 'mending cars' in their garage. The teacher skilfully developed children's literacy skills as they

were encouraged to explain and record what had gone wrong with each car and quickly checked children's recognition of letters and numerals using the car number plates. In a lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils' literacy skills were extended well as they discussed how they would use their senses to describe a forest setting and then shared how they would move and feel if they suddenly met a 'Gruffalo' in the forest!

- The school has developed a more structured approach to the teaching of mathematics. For example, in Key Stage 2 teachers ensured that pupils were thoroughly engaged while extending their numeracy skills by solving a range of practical problems and timed challenges.
- The teaching of reading has improved and pupils enjoy a greater range of reading material.
- Nevertheless, a few lessons require improvement. In such lessons, pupils' pace of learning slows. Teachers do not always check what pupils already know and understand. As a result, work set for some pupils is too easy; for others it is too hard and so pupils do not make as much progress as they could.
- Teachers' marking and feedback of pupils' written work sometimes tells pupils precisely how to improve their writing, but this is not always the case. Pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their written work and they do not always have time to reflect and act upon comments made.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school provides a very caring and harmonious community, where everyone is made to feel that they really matter. Pupils work hard and they are very friendly and polite.
- Children settle quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage. They develop positive personal and social skills which sets them up well for learning from the very start of school.
- The school succeeds in encouraging pupils to behave well. Pupils are very keen to receive a 'green card' in recognition of their hard work and good behaviour. However, very occasionally a few pupils become a little restless in lessons that do not interest them as much.
- Attendance has risen and is broadly average. The school works closely with pupils and their families. Any non-attendance is followed up rigorously and this reinforces the importance of regular attendance and helps avoid unnecessary absence.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, but they are confident that if they had any concerns they would find someone in school to help. Pupils say that adults in school also notice straight away if someone looks sad and then talk to them to find out what the problem is.
- The school helps pupils understand how to stay safe and avoid unnecessary risks. For example, pupils are well informed about how to stay safe when using computers and they have a good understanding and awareness of potential dangers they might encounter.
- The vast majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire consider their children are happy and well looked after in school and most would recommend the school to other families.

The leadership and management are good

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has been the driving force behind the marked improvements made following the period with a significant number of staffing changes. The headteacher very quickly gained the support of staff and governors alike.
- Senior leaders, including governors, show great determination in driving forward improvements. There is a clear sense of teamwork and all questionnaires returned by staff during the inspection were completely positive.
- The leadership of teaching is rigorous and robust. New teachers have been successfully introduced to the school's procedures. Senior leaders have high expectations; procedures to improve the quality of teaching are effective because they focus clearly on how well teaching helps pupils learn.

- Strong leadership of teaching means the quality of teaching has improved, pupils' progress has accelerated and attainment and attendance have risen throughout school. The effectiveness of leaders at all levels is improving because of the strong focus on providing training to help teachers develop their leadership and training skills.
- The leadership of the support that is provided for those pupils who are disabled, those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and those with special educational needs, is good and helps any pupils who might be at risk of falling behind in their learning.
- The curriculum is improving and supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. The school has thoroughly revised the curriculum for English and mathematics and this is helping teachers to plan lessons that get the best out of pupils. The school sports funding is used to provide a range of sports clubs and activities, which are well attended. Physical education has a high profile and some of the teaching in these lessons is of outstanding quality. Such activities are helping pupils improve their fitness levels and develop healthy lifestyles.
- The local authority considers the school has improved significantly and is confident that the school is able to maintain its trend of improvement with minimal external support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very committed and supportive of the school. They carefully check that pupils benefit from new developments, such as the reorganisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as the impact of pupil premium funding on pupils' achievement.
 - Governors are kept well informed. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and how well pupils are doing. They are aware of the effectiveness of the leadership of teaching. Performance management objectives are linked closely to improving teaching and pupils' progress.
 - The governing body ensures that equality of opportunity is promoted well and that the school meets the current requirements for safeguarding pupils.

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 | 107545 |
| Local authority | Calderdale |
| Inspection number | 426008 |

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 | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 205 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Fr. P. Nealon |
| Headteacher | Mrs. A McNally |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 June 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01422 244628 |
| Fax number | 01422 242088 |
| Email address | head@st-malachys.calderdale.sch.uk |

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