

St Anne's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Feilden Street, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 1LQ

Inspection dates 24–25 October 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.

- Children start the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected of three-year-olds. By the end of Year 6 they attain average standards. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is good. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong. As a result, pupils learn in a caring environment and are not afraid to take risks in their learning because they know they will be supported.
- Pupils feel safe in school and behave well. They enjoy school very much, have positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well.
- The headteacher and her entire team work well together for the good of the pupils. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and senior leaders and governors know well the strengths as well as areas for improvement. Leaders ensure that the progress pupils make and the quality of teaching are checked closely and are improving well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The majority of teaching is good and not outstanding. Although activities for the most able pupils are effectively matched to their abilities during the main part of the lesson, the introduction to the lesson is the same for all and does not challenge them sufficiently and this slows the progress they make.
- Teachers sometimes provide too much direction and do not provide enough opportunity for pupils to be independent and take control of their learning.
- Pupils do not have regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Managers who lead subjects and have overall responsibility for their team are not yet rigorously monitoring and evaluating all aspects of their areas of responsibility to raise achievement further.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed nine lessons and visited various classrooms for shorter periods of time. One lesson was jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, senior leaders, and teachers with responsibilities for leading and managing subjects and key stages. Meetings were also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.
- There were an insufficient number of responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors spoke with parents in the playground and held a meeting with them. This information has been taken into consideration.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including: the school's data showing pupils' current progress; documents relating to the school's own view of its performance; the school improvement plan; records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Pritiben Patel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British background. A large proportion of pupils are of other white heritage. Other groups are from Pakistani, African and other heritages. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is nearly twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is double the national average and increasing.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is higher than most schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is in line with other schools. Pupils' needs relate mainly to speech, language and communication, physical difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is above average. (This is additional funding given to schools by the government to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has attained the International School award 2011 for outstanding development work with schools abroad.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the most able pupils are challenged right from the start of the lesson
 - all pupils have greater opportunities to work independently and take a lead in their own learning
 - pupils have regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that managers, who lead subjects and their team, rigorously monitor and evaluate all aspects of their area of responsibility to further improve the achievement of pupils.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the nursery with skills that are well below those expected of three-year-olds. Their communication and language skills are particularly weak. Due to a nurturing environment, as well as a curriculum that meets their needs effectively, having a clear focus on extending vocabulary and developing spoken language, children enter Year 1 below average. This represents good progress from their starting points.
- There has been a huge improvement in Year 1 phonics work (the sounds that letters make) in 2013. In 2012 most pupils did not achieve the expected standard. However, due to the training of staff and grouping pupils by ability so that they receive teaching which matches their needs, more pupils than nationally have achieved the expected standard.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this is not a true reflection of the progress that pupils make. For example, in the 2013 group, a quarter of pupils had not been at the school since the beginning of Year 1. Over half of these pupils speak English as an additional language and some of these pupils spoke little or no English when they arrived at the school. Senior leaders recognise that pupils in Year 1 and 2 require considerable support. As a result, a Polish-speaking teaching assistant has been employed and much support is given to pupils on a small group basis. These are having a positive impact.
- Pupils attain average standards by the end of Year 6. Writing is relatively the weakest area of performance. A check of pupils' books shows that they do not have good quality and regular opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Pupils achieve well and equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work. There are no significant gaps in the achievement of different groups. Senior leaders use resources wherever they are needed to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- Those eligible for the pupil premium receive additional one-to-one and small group support from adults. A social worker has also been employed on a part-time basis to help support pupils and their families socially. As a result, these pupils achieve in line with their peers in English and mathematics. Pupils who are eligible for free-school-meals are a term behind in their reading and writing and two terms behind in mathematics by the end of Year 6 in comparison to pupils not eligible for free-school-meals. Plans are in place to ensure that these gaps are addressed.
- Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and those from all different ethnic backgrounds achieve well. The proportions of pupils who make expected and more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics is favourable in comparison to other schools.

The quality of teaching is good

- Caring relationships and good teaching are the foundation for the successful learning of pupils. When pupils are asked about their teachers, their faces light up showing the high regard they have for them. Parents are very happy with the quality of teaching their children receive and comments such as, 'My child has made very good progress in reading' were typical. One parent who is new to speaking English was explaining how her daughter was now teaching her English and correcting her when she was wrong!
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and, as a result, most pupils behave well and only a small minority need gentle reminders.
- Teaching assistants are effective and need little guidance because they know their roles well. They provide good support to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in the classroom. They also deliver a wide range of programmes in literacy and numeracy to help pupils who are falling behind in their learning to quickly catch-up.
- Homework is set on a regular basis to reinforce and extend the learning in class. 'Talk Tickets'

are sent home before the beginning of a unit of work so that parents can help develop key vocabulary in English.

- Most pupils know the levels that they are working at and the level they need to move to.
- Teachers plan activities for the main part of a lesson which match the different abilities of pupils effectively. However, introductions to lessons are the same for all ability groups and, as a result, the most able pupils do not receive the challenge they are capable of during this time. For example, in a Key Stage 1 numeracy lesson, the teacher was introducing 3D shapes. However, the most able pupils already knew the names of all the 3D shapes. This slowed the progress they made.
- In a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson, the teacher asked pupils to assess each others 'Spooky' story that they had written. He made clear what he was looking for and let the pupils get on with their task. Pupils were in control of their learning and working independently. This gave pupils confidence and enabled them to make good progress. However, some lessons are too controlled by the teacher and this does not allow pupils to become effective independent learners who can work by themselves.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In this caring school everyone is included. As a result, comments from parents such as, 'My child loves school' and 'My daughter is happy here' are typical.
- Pupils want to do well in school and are proud of their achievements. This was clearly seen when a pupil in Key Stage 2 was bursting with enthusiasm to share a story that he had written. Pupils are highly positive about receiving the, 'Worker of the Week' award, which recognises their good behaviour and work.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. Pupils know the fire-drill procedure as well as the steps to take if a fire started at home because the fire brigade have spoken to them. Pupils have designed posters about how to keep themselves safe if a stranger approaches them. They also know about cyber-bullying and the importance of clicking the 'Dolphin' on the computer screen and informing an adult if they see any inappropriate content.
- Pupils' understanding of different cultures is good. Parents value and comment positively about how pupils from different cultures have integrated so well. Pupils enjoy celebrating Eid and learning about different cultures during a themed, 'European Day'. They enjoy the opportunity they have to learn French in Key Stage 1 and Spanish in Key Stage 2. Pupils also write to their friends around the world due to the links staff have made with schools abroad as part of the International award.
- Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities. The school council raise money for charity and decide on what playground equipment to purchase. Play leaders help the younger pupils to organise games at lunchtimes. Prefects are very proud that they are role models.
- Pupils speak highly of the wide range of sports opportunities they have including handball, football and table tennis as well as the borough-wide competitions they participate in. They know about healthy lifestyles and, for example, the importance of having a healthy heart rate.
- Attendance is in line with schools nationally. Staff work hard to deter families from visiting their country of origin during term time.
- Behaviour is good but less strong during unstructured periods such as break and lunch times. Pupils say that on the rare occasions that they may experience bullying staff quickly sort things out. Racism is not an issue.

The leadership and management are good

- Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The majority of teaching is good and improving. The tracking of the progress that pupils make is better. Pupils are tracked termly

and those who are not making the expected progress are identified and supported. The understanding that staff have about pupil progress and the use made of this information to plan lessons has improved too.

- The leadership of teaching is robust. Teaching is observed regularly. Teachers are given clear judgements about the quality of their teaching as well as strengths and weaknesses. Opportunities to improve are provided to staff via the sharing of good practice and training, as well as staff teaching in teams.
- Parents speak very highly of staff. They are kept up-to-date via the school website and regular newsletters are sent home. Parents help to run the school library; they attend meetings about the curriculum and provide help during school visits.
- Arts are a strong feature of the curriculum. Pupils are involved in producing a variety of art work such as mosaics, stained glass windows and paintings. Staff use the curriculum to provide 'real life' experiences for pupils. As a result, pupils regularly participate in visits out of school such as, local walks, visits to museums and outdoor activity centres. A good range of clubs outside school hours provide good enrichment such as art, choir and maths.
- The extra sports funding has been used to broaden the range of sports on offer to pupils as well as using sports coaches to enhance the work of teachers so they become more skilled at leading sports themselves. This is having a positive impact on the attitudes of pupils and they are looking forward to experiencing a wide range of sporting activities.
- The local authority know the school very well. They have helped to implement the system used to track pupils' progress, have observed the quality of teaching and helped to ensure that the performance of teachers is monitored robustly.
- The capability of leaders to take the school to the next level is good as is evidenced by the considerable increase in the results of the Year 1 phonics test in 2013.
- The headteacher wants to empower all staff and, as a result, she has established a leadership structure whereby staff work in teams to lead subjects. Support staff too are part of a team. Although managers of subjects are monitoring and evaluating aspects of their areas such as pupils' books, they are not monitoring all aspects of their areas fully, such as teaching and learning and teachers' planning. This is limiting the impact they make on pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the progress that pupils make. They attend training when necessary and have a good understanding of the quality of teaching and of systems for the performance management of staff. Governors know how the pupil premium money is being used and the impact this is having on progress as well as how the sports funding is being used. They provide both support and challenge. Governors meet with staff to discuss the schools work. Finances are well managed.

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	119511
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	429631

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glyn Hughes
Headteacher	Barbara Cuff
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2012
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