

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Cedar Road, Chorley, Lancashire , PR6 0JF

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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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.

- All groups of pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. They achieve standards that are above average.
- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection. They are now good across the school. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan and deliver lessons that lead to good progress. A good proportion of teaching is outstanding.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils because they are well supported and work is carefully planned to meet their needs.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They get on very well with their teachers and with each other. Excellent behaviour in lessons and around the school creates a very positive climate for learning.
- School leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and where it can improve further. They have secured improvements to teaching and achievement.
- The school's curriculum engages pupils well and contributes to their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always make sure that all pupils, especially the most-able, are consistently challenged to reach the highest levels and to make the best possible progress.
- Pupils do well in writing but their achievement is not as strong as in reading and mathematics, especially for boys.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part lessons, including one joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and managers and with two governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents. These included data concerning pupils' current achievement, development plans and performance management information. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings and the school adviser's reports were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 34 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also considered 24 responses to the questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clare Henderson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in seven single year group classes from the Reception Year to Year 6.
- A very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average, but is increasing, especially pupils who speak Polish as a first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children from service families) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of outstanding teaching and raise achievement by:
 - making sure that teachers always plan work that is closely matched to the needs of all pupils, especially the most-able, so that they are consistently challenged to reach the highest levels and to make the best possible progress
 - improving pupils' attainment and rates of progress in writing so that they match those in reading and mathematics, especially for boys.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are generally slightly below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress during the Reception Year and are well prepared to enter Year 1 with standards that are close to the national average.
- Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been rising and are now just above the national average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. After a fall in achievement in 2012 there has been a strong recovery and 2013 test results show that standards in reading and writing are above average, and well-above average in mathematics. All pupils made at least the expected progress in writing and mathematics, and the proportion making expected progress in reading was above national figures.
- The school's detailed tracking information shows that all groups of pupils are making good progress across the school, whatever their starting points. This includes pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, and those who speak English as an additional language. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and work in pupils' books confirms that they make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. Teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils read regularly and have a good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national average in 2013.
- Pupils' writing skills have improved since the previous inspection. Better teaching has raised standards and improved progress. Although pupils do well in writing, their achievement is not as strong as in reading and mathematics, especially for boys.
- The fall in achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 was caused mainly by weaker performance in mathematics. School data show that this is not a consistent trend. In 2013 standards in mathematics were well-above average and pupils made above average progress. Pupils' basic skills in mathematics are secure, and they apply and use these skills effectively. As a result they make good progress in mathematics across the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are accurately identified and they receive good support when they need it. As a result they achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive very effective support. The school has employed a Polish speaking teaching assistant to meet the needs of the increasing number of pupils who speak Polish as a first language. As a result these pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make the same good progress as other pupils. Test results at the end of 2012 showed that the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in English and mathematics was approximately one term behind that of other pupils. Results for 2013 show that this gap is closing. This shows the school's successful commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good across the school, with a good proportion that is outstanding. Pupils made at least good progress in almost all the lessons seen during the inspection, and work in pupils' books shows that teaching has been good over time and is improving.
- Teachers have high expectations and know pupils well. They use praise effectively and plan

lessons that motivate and engage pupils in their learning. As a result pupils enjoy lessons, have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well.

- In the best lessons, where pupils progress most rapidly, teachers match work carefully to the needs and abilities of all pupils and there is a good pace and challenge to learning. There are opportunities for pupils to work independently or in groups investigating ideas or solving problems. Questioning is used very skilfully to reinforce and check pupils' knowledge and understanding, and to challenge and extend their learning.
- In a Year 2 English lesson, for example, pupils were building up and writing a description of a troll. The teacher made sure that all groups of pupils, including the most able, had different and challenging targets to include various features in their description, and used questioning to encourage them to do even better and move the lesson at a brisk pace. Pupils were highly engaged in their learning and showed great enthusiasm for the task, and made outstanding progress.
- Where teaching is less strong work is not as well matched to different pupils' needs and abilities. The most-able pupils in particular are not always given work which is challenging enough to enable them to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress. In these lessons the pace of learning is slower.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together and use a range of strategies to deal with any slower progress. Pupils who need extra support receive it, either in lessons or in individual or small group sessions. This includes those pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium and those who speak English as an additional language. As a result these pupils make good progress and achieve as well as other pupils in the school.
- Teachers mark work regularly and there is a good balance of praise and suggestions for improvement. As a result pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. The school has recently introduced dedicated 'fix it' time when pupils can beneficially respond to teachers' comments and suggestions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils have very good and productive relationships with their teachers and get on very well together. They make an excellent contribution to their own learning. They show great courtesy to staff and visitors. There is a very positive climate for learning throughout the school.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They show a thirst for knowledge and are very keen to do their best. They enjoy school greatly and attendance is above average and improving.
- Pupils say they feel completely safe in school. They have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including road safety and when using the internet. They understand clearly the different forms bullying can take, but say that it is very rare in school. They say they would report it promptly and have every confidence that the school would sort it out quickly if it occurred.
- School behaviour logs show that there are very few instances of poor behaviour, but that these are dealt with effectively. The school can show marked improvements in behaviour and attendance for the very few pupils who present challenging behaviour. Records show that the excellent behaviour seen during the inspection is typical.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire thought that their children were safe in the school and well cared for, and that pupils were well behaved. Inspection evidence confirms this.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a strong vision for the school and its future development. This is shared by staff, governors and parents and is demonstrated by the very strong support shown for the school in the parent and staff questionnaires. There is a very positive atmosphere throughout the school.
- School leaders have a clear view of how well the school is performing and where it needs to improve. They have ensured that key issues identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. As a result the quality of teaching has improved and pupils' achievement has risen. This positive track record, together with good governance, means that the school is well placed to improve further.
- Improved tracking systems check pupils' progress more regularly and accurately. Any underachievement or slower progress is tackled by providing extra help if pupils need it. For example, the school has employed a Polish speaking teaching assistant to cater for the increasing numbers of pupils who speak Polish as a first language. This ensures that all groups of pupils in the school achieve well and shows that the school promotes equal opportunities for all pupils effectively.
- Information on pupils' progress is taken into account when judging how well teachers are doing, and is considered when making decisions about their salary.
- There are effective systems to check on the quality of teaching. These identify where further support or training is needed. Coaching and mentoring have improved the quality of teaching, and this has led to a rise in achievement. An increasing proportion of teaching in the school is outstanding.
- The curriculum is well planned and encourages problem solving and creative thinking. It engages pupils very well in their learning and promotes very positive behaviour. The increasing use of the outside woodland 'Garden of Eden' area really enthuses pupils. One referred to it as a 'magical and peaceful' place. A wide range of activities and clubs add enrichment, as do special events, trips and visits. For example, during the inspection a group of pupils presented a Bangra dance performance for parents which was very well appreciated.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, and is successfully promoted across the school. There are very close and strong links with the local church and there is a clear focus on social and moral issues. As a result pupils are reflective and responsible and show a good awareness of issues beyond the school.
- The school is using the new primary school sport funding successfully to improve the quality of physical education in the school by bringing in specialist teachers from a local high school to teach lessons and coach staff, and to widen the range of extra-curricular sporting activities offered.
- The local authority has provided effective support in reviewing the performance of the school and the headteacher. As the school has improved the local authority's involvement has reduced.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school has improved. Governors are now better informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning, and have a clearer understanding of how well the school is doing and where it needs to improve. As a result they hold the school to account more effectively by asking 'awkward' questions and setting ambitious performance targets for the headteacher. They make sure that information about pupils' progress is considered when deciding on teachers' pay. They know how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it is having on raising achievement. They ensure that the finances are well managed and that the school meets its statutory duties, including those relating to safeguarding.

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	119671
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426159

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Jenner
Headteacher	Kathy Blackledge
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2012
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