

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Chorley

Brooke Street, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 0LB

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2013

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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From a starting point that is generally below what is typical for their age, pupils make good progress. Attainment is rising to above average when pupils leave school.
- Teaching is often good and better. Lessons are frequently exciting and include a variety of activities that sustain pupils' enthusiasm.
- Pupils' information and communication technology (ICT) skills are high and contribute well to learning in many lessons.
- Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are extremely polite and treat visitors and one another with respect. They feel very safe in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted most effectively. As a result, this is a happy and friendly school. Attendance is high.
- The new headteacher has conducted an audit of need and set out a clear vision for the future. The top priority is developing a team approach to change, and success is evident in the high morale in the school.
- Monitoring of teaching and achievement is precise and ensures both aspects are improving.
- Leaders and governors support change and the school goes from strength to strength.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently outstanding and some still requires improvement. More pupils could make at least good progress.
- Work is not always set at the right level and occasionally the pace slows. Pupils do not consistently have enough time to work independently, especially in mathematics.
- The outdoor provision for children in the Reception class is not as accessible and exciting as for children in the Nursery.
- The subject leaders' roles are not yet fully embedded. Governors do not have a full enough view of pupils' progress to enable them to contribute to setting school's priorities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons and parts of lessons. They visited all classes.
- Meetings were held with staff, two groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils' books were reviewed with a focus on writing and mathematics in Years 2, 3 and 6.
- Pupils from different classes read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's plans for the future, evaluation of performance and information about pupils' progress and safeguarding.
- The school's website was reviewed.
- The views of 16 parents were analysed through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also reviewed the findings from the school's recent audit of parents' views. Other parents shared their opinions of the school at the start of the day.
- Inspectors analysed 13 returns by staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Bimla Kumari

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including the few who speak English as an additional language, is well below average.
- The proportion known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided for the children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is new to the school this term.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase the rate of pupils' progress from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring lessons always go at a brisk pace and pupils have enough opportunities to work independently, especially in mathematics
 - raising expectations of the amount of work pupils complete and matching tasks precisely to meet all pupils' needs, especially the more-able
 - making better use of the outdoor space for children in the Reception class and ensuring that enough adults are at hand to interact with children.
- Improving leadership and management by:
 - embedding the role of subject leaders, especially in drawing up action plans for their subjects
 - checking that governors have enough information about pupils' progress so that they can play a fuller role in setting the school's priorities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with attainment that is below what is typical for their age and weaker in communication, mathematics and their knowledge of the world. Overall progress is good. Many interesting experiences broaden their understanding of the world beyond their home. They grow in confidence and eagerly discuss their activities. Attainment is rising with many children exceeding the level expected when they leave Reception. Numeracy and literacy skills are not yet as high as other areas of learning.
- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in Year 1 to Year 6. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has slowly risen to above average and results in 2013 were high in reading, writing and mathematics. Currently, reading and writing are stronger than mathematics, reflecting the impact of the structured approach to teaching letters and sounds. In Year 1, the rising trend is also evident in an increase in the national reading assessment, which in 2013 was in line with the national average.
- Attainment has fluctuated more at the end of Key Stage 2, with a rise in newcomers to the school during this key stage. The low numbers in each cohort present an uneven pattern of test results. Nevertheless, over the last three years there has been a sustained rise to above average in mathematics, reading and the skills of grammar, punctuation and spelling. Writing was average. The school's data and evidence in pupils' books show this rise is set to continue and attainment is above average, including in writing.
- Reading is good and pupils successfully use their skills to support learning in other subjects. Research skills are a crucial part of the successful use of ICT. Years 5 and 6 pupils work at levels more usually seen in secondary schools, especially when creating a website.
- Writing is improving with more success in accurate use of basic skills. The school has increased the pupils' motivation to write by using visits and exciting topics as a focus for writing. This has enhanced pupils' skills to write imaginatively and also closed the gap between the attainment of boys and girls.
- Year 6 includes several skilled mathematicians already working at above-average levels. Basic skills are taught effectively with regular mental mathematics sessions increasing pupils' confidence to apply their skills to solve problems.
- However, in some lessons pupils do not always have enough time to work independently and learn from their errors.
- Overall, the more-able pupils make good progress but this is not yet consistent in all years. Teachers do not always set work that challenges pupils and so increases the proportion of pupils making at least good progress.
- There is no significant difference between the attainment of those in receipt of the pupil premium and other pupils. The small numbers known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress. Overall, their attainment is slightly lower than that of others, being closer to average in English and mathematics in some years because few are currently working at above-average levels.
- The school has only a few pupils identified as disabled or with special educational needs. They make good progress from their differing starting points, with some excellent progress to overcome more specific difficulties. Progress is linked directly to effective identification of need and prompt support. This reflects the successful promotion of equality of opportunity.
- There is a gradual increase in pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a few with little-spoken English. Observations show these pupils are supported well by staff and peers. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff use actions and simple vocabulary and these children settle happily and already show understanding of a few spoken words. Overall progress is good.
- With attainment rising and above average, including in science and ICT, pupils are well prepared for secondary education.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice in different years and this enables pupils to make good progress.
- The headteacher has tightened up assessment procedures; teachers now have a more informed picture of the levels their pupils are working at and the next steps needed. This has improved marking. Many examples clearly tell pupils how to improve, and they respond to comments and correct errors.
- In the best lessons, teachers use their knowledge about pupils' attainment to set work at just the right level for all pupils. However, this is not always effective, especially if the pupils are taught for too long as a whole class before moving to their individual work. This leads to the more-able pupils finding parts of lessons too easy while the lower-attaining pupils find them too hard.
- Teachers manage behaviour most effectively. Good humour and consistency in approaches ensure lessons run very smoothly. Teachers do not always have the same high expectations of the amount of work pupils produce, and on the odd occasion the pace of lessons slows and pupils fail to complete enough work.
- Reading and writing are taught effectively. Teachers have good subject knowledge and classrooms include useful prompts to guide pupils. They also provide pupils with useful checklists to enable them to tick off what they need to include in their work to be successful.
- Mathematics lessons include a brisk opener, as for example in Year 2, when pupils used fans with numbers to show their answers. The teacher used pupils' answers swiftly to provide additional advice where it was most needed. Learning is less effective in lessons when groups are taught together and pupils have to wait for others to complete the problem before they move on.
- In comparison to this, mathematics in Year 6 was very effective because the lesson was organised extremely effectively and allowed pupils to complete an ICT task, record their results and then move back to their independent work. Very effective learning took place.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, lessons are based on a secure understanding of the needs of these children. They exploit current topics, such as the Gunpowder Plot. Children talked knowingly about the Houses of Parliament and there was some imaginative debate about how Guy Fawkes met his death! The outdoor area for the Nursery is much larger and attractive than the space available for the Reception Class. Although the Reception children access the Nursery space in the afternoon, it is not always used effectively. Staff take too much of a supervisory role rather than intervening to extend learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is usually exemplary. In lessons and around school, pupils conduct themselves in an orderly manner, showing the utmost respect for staff and one another. They are extremely polite and eager to share their experiences. Pupils and parents are justifiably proud of their school.
- At play, pupils are energetic but with due regard to the welfare of others. There is a good atmosphere of friendship and fun. Pupils are aware of how their actions can hurt others and keen to say that there is rarely any bullying in their school. Discussions show an understanding of all types of bullying and pupils have every confidence in the school's systems to resolve any concerns.
- All pupils are eager to learn. Older pupils skilfully manage their own learning and relish the opportunity to work at projects that are at a high level. Pupils in Year 5 showed excellent work ethics as they designed their website and also when demonstrating how to improve it.
- In assembly, pupils are pleased to be rewarded for success but also value the efforts of others. Behaviour is excellent and pupils sustain interest and enthusiasm, being very eager to discover which class has gained the highest attendance. With classes gaining 100%, it is clear to see why

overall attendance is well above average.

- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They appreciate how staff advise them about dangers and feel they are well informed to face any problems.
- The pupils' generosity of spirit spreads beyond the school and, led by an enthusiastic school council, they raise considerable funds for charity.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has taken up the reins of leadership smoothly this term. He has gained the respect of parents who welcome the opportunity to chat in the morning. An initial audit of the school's results in national tests has provided a secure base for leading the school forward. This overview of the school's strengths and aspects to improve is accurate and supported by the effective deputy headteacher, staff and governors. The school is well placed to continue to improve.
- Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching and the headteacher has put in support where needed. As a result, teaching is improving although a few aspects are not yet fully resolved. For example, the school has future plans to improve the outdoors provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to increase support. The monitoring of teaching leads to staff receiving effective training.
- Senior leaders concentrate on monitoring pupils' progress and have used this information effectively to identify more-able pupils who need closer scrutiny to ensure they always make enough progress, especially in mathematics. The focus on progress in Key Stage 1 has reaped benefits in above-average attainment. The headteacher describes recent success as 'staff now feeling more accountable for their pupils' progress because they know where the pupils should be and the next steps they need to take'.
- Staff are set targets based on their performance and the progress pupils make, and salary awards are linked to achievement of these targets.
- As the headteacher accumulates evidence, it is being transferred into action plans. These are not yet fully complete and the role of subject leaders, some new to this responsibility, in drawing up plans is not embedded securely. Nevertheless, the headteacher's recent report to governors shows a clear view of priorities and how success is to be achieved.
- The curriculum provides very well for pupils to gain a wider perspective of the world. Visits and visitors extend their knowledge and a wide range of clubs is available. Planning is secure and gives an overview of how skills are developed year-on-year. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum is based on learning through activity although there is not always adult support for children in the Reception class when outdoors.
- The new sports funding is being used wisely. During the inspection, teachers observed sports coaches leading sessions and described these as beneficial, not only to the pupils but also to themselves as they picked up useful tips to improve their own skills.
- Displays in school show a wide range of interesting topics covered. Photographs and examples of pupils' work confirm that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully.
- The local authority provides 'light-touch' support, extending to offer guidance to the headteacher in his first year.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are linked to classes and have first-hand experience of life in school. They regularly carry out informal reviews of teaching and help in class with reading. As a result, governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and how support is provided when concerns are identified. They understand that teachers have targets and check that salary rewards link to these. Governors know that attainment in Key Stage 1 has risen but do not analyse data closely to ensure an in-depth knowledge of progress and how this compares with national data. This hampers their contribution to setting the school's priorities. Governors check that

money is spent astutely. They are vigilant in ensuring that the pupil premium is helping eligible pupils to progress. Governors ensure that safeguarding meets requirements.

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	119670
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	429963

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	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Parkinson
Headteacher	Barry Broderick
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2009
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