

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Withnell

Bury Lane, Withnell, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 8SD

**Inspection dates** 3–4 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- Good progress is made by all pupils in all key stages and at the end Year 6 pupils are attaining well above the national average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides an excellent start to the children's education. They settle in quickly and develop good independence and make good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. A relentless focus on the quality of teaching is ensuring that it is continually improving.
- The school has a very caring family atmosphere where pupils feel safe and secure. Behaviour is good and relationships are excellent. The school provides a happy environment where good learning can take place.
- The school caters very well for all pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural needs.
- Pupils listen carefully to their teachers, work together well and try hard in their lessons. Lessons run smoothly and as a result, pupils learn quickly.
- The senior leadership team provides a strong and clear direction for the school. Through rigorous monitoring systems it has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It knows where the school needs to go and has the drive and enthusiasm to get it there.
- Governors are very well-informed. They monitor the quality of the teaching and learning and the progress made by its pupils very carefully. They are well-equipped to challenge and hold the school to account.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough of the teaching is outstanding.
- Subject leaders do not play a sufficiently active role in the monitoring of standards in their subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons delivered by five teachers, including a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a few short visits to observe pupils in small-group intervention sessions and phonics sessions and also heard some pupils read. A class collective worship was also observed.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, representatives of the governing body, a group of seven parents, a local authority representative and School Adviser, and a group of pupils. The inspector also talked to pupils in the classrooms and on the playground.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documents including: the school's own information about pupils' progress; planning; the monitoring of learning and teacher performance; organisation of the curriculum; safeguarding information; and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector also took account of 23 responses to the on-line survey (Parent View) and two letters delivered to the school and 11 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Peter Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than found nationally and there are none who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average and the proportion supported at school action plus is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional funding provided by the government for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- An associate headteacher was appointed in January 2011 and was supported by the school's senior teacher. In October 2012, the senior teacher was appointed as deputy headteacher. The following September a substantive headteacher was appointed.
- The school has received a number of awards, including Healthy School status and Activemark.
- The school exceeds 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?

- To improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their extended writing, particularly in other subjects
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving tasks and real life situations
  - assessing pupils' understanding early in lessons to enable teachers to modify their teaching if necessary or enable pupils, particularly the more able, to get on with their independent work more quickly
  - ensuring that marking matches the very best practice in the school by consistently making it clear to pupils how they can improve their work and giving them time to improve it
  - setting high expectations of how pupils should present their work so that they always do so to their best.
- To further strengthen the leadership of the school by developing the subject leaders' role in the monitoring of standards in their subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Attainment has been rising in Key Stages 1 and 2 over the last three years and showed very rapid improvement in 2013. Pupils are now making good progress in all key stages. They enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge which are usually broadly typical for their age, although sometimes below, and leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment which is well above the national average.
- Children settle into the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly and develop good independence. Good and outstanding teaching ensures that they learn quickly and by the end of their Reception Year have acquired skills which are typical of their age, and the majority showing a good level of development and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Good progress is continued in Key Stage 1. A sharp focus on developing essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics result in pupils attaining well above the national average.
- Pupils, from different starting points, have made good progress in Key Stage 2 for the last two years. Good progress is also being made in all other year groups. The proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them or exceeding it compares very favourably with that seen nationally. The school's internal data indicate that this will be sustained in future years.
- Pupils read widely and often both in and out of school. The school encourages a love of reading through a range of strategies including a very popular book club. Phonics (the linking of letters to their sounds in reading and writing) is taught effectively throughout the school and pupils are able to apply this knowledge to help them in their reading and writing. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in phonics knowledge at the end of Year 1 has been above the national average for the past two years. Consequently, standards in reading are very high.
- Achievement in writing is also good but not as strong as in reading. Good teaching, focused on developing the key skills of writing and spelling, is resulting in improving standards. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupil to extend their writing or apply their skills in other subjects.
- The school has introduced a calculation policy which is followed throughout the school and ensures that the pupils receive a consistent approach in the acquisition of essential mathematical skills. Consequently, standards in mathematics are high and improving. However, the work is predominantly number work and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to apply these skills to problem solving in real-life situations.
- The school has quite small cohorts and much smaller numbers of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs compared to other schools. It tracks the progress of these pupils very carefully and reviews their progress frequently to enable teachers to plan effectively to meet their needs. As a result, these pupils make good progress in line with other pupils in the school.
- This is also the case for pupil premium pupils. The additional funding is used to provide targeted support for the pupils who need it and also ensure these pupils can access all the educational opportunities the school provides. They also make similar progress to their school peers.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- School leaders focus relentlessly on improving the quality of teaching. They follow rigorous procedures for monitoring of teaching to evaluate its impact on pupils' progress. They use these evaluations to identify areas for improvements and plan well-targeted additional training for teachers. As a result, teaching is now consistently good and improving.
- Teachers plan their lessons carefully to meet the needs and interests of all pupils and all abilities. Lessons have clear learning goals and pupils are given challenging success criteria which enable them to judge their own progress. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons because teachers make them interesting and fun.
- Teaching is good because teachers set consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour and

effort. Lessons are given at a brisk pace which ensures pupils learn quickly. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and lessons run smoothly and without disruption; consequently, pupils make good progress.

- Teachers have good questioning skills and good subject knowledge. They use questions skilfully to test the pupils' understanding, provide further challenge, and to develop their thinking skills. Praise is used very well to encourage pupils to respond to questions or challenges. Wrong answers or misconceptions are corrected sensitively; consequently, pupils are not afraid to try.
- However, on occasions, questioning is limited to a small number of individuals and opportunities to assess the understanding of all the pupils are missed, or is not done early enough in the lesson to enable the teacher to modify their teaching or determine whether some pupils, particularly the more able, are ready to move more quickly on to their independent work.
- In the very best lessons, pupils are allowed to explore their own methods for solving problems or make decisions about their own learning. For example, in Year 6, pupils carried out personal research on a topic of their own choosing and produced high-quality power-point presentations.
- The school works hard to ensure that the more-able pupils are challenged. All pupils are assessed to determine if they have particular gifts or talents and then additional provision to meet their particular needs is provided. For example, the school has visiting authors who inspire pupils to write well and also hold workshops with the more-able writers.
- The standard of marking is good. It tells pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work and in the very best practice routinely allows them time to respond to the marking. However, this is not always the case.
- There is also insufficient emphasis given to good handwriting and how pupils present their work. Consequently, pupils do not always present their work to their best.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good and often outstanding. It provides the children with interesting activities which they are able to explore with independence while the adults in the setting develop the children's language, mathematical and thinking skills through skilful interventions. Consequently, the children gain in confidence and make good progress.
- Teaching assistants display a high level of skill and are well deployed in all lessons. They provide individual or groups of pupils with well-targeted support, which contributes much to the good progress made in the pupils' learning.

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

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is consistently good. They have a real desire to learn and work well together in class. Behaviour in lessons was generally good. Only on some occasions when the work is not matched to pupils' abilities well enough do pupils grow restless or lose concentration. Overall, they have a positive attitude to their learning and this contributes much to the smooth running of lessons and enables the pupils to learn well.
- The caring atmosphere of the school, based upon principles of mutual respect and consideration for others, is a strong feature of the school. Pupils and parents describe the school as being 'like a big family'.
- Pupils genuinely care for each other. For example, while the inspector was talking to a group of pupils on the playground, one broke off the conversation when she spotted a fellow pupil who had hurt herself. Unprompted she immediately went over to see if she was all right and provide support and comfort.
- Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They feel very safe and well-cared for at school. They know how to keep themselves safe, for example, from the dangers posed by internet use and have a good understanding of bullying and its different forms, including cyber-bullying. They are adamant that there is no bullying in the school and are confident that even minor fallings-out will be dealt with promptly and effectively by the staff.
- Attendance is very good and is consistently above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is very low compared to the national average. This helps the school

fulfil the strong commitment it has to equal opportunities for all its pupils by ensuring that pupils attend school as much, do not miss their learning and make good progress.

- The school has good systems of behaviour management. Pupils, parents and staff all agree that behaviour in school is good. The school's own behaviour records confirm this.
- Procedures for safeguarding and child protection are excellent and the school and governors ensure that all statutory duties are met.

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

- The school leaders provide the school with a strong sense of direction. They have a very clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school based upon rigorous and accurate self-evaluation. They have high ambitions for the school and set high expectations for staff, pupils and themselves.
- The school staff are highly positive about the school leadership; they feel well supported in their professional development and are fully committed to the drive for school improvement.
- School leaders use end-of-key stage data and the school's own internal information about pupils' progress to evaluate effectively the school's performance and set new targets for school improvement. These objectives are clearly set out in a detailed school improvement plan which has clear actions and success criteria enabling the school and governors to check on progress.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are very happy with the school and speak of the leadership of the school in very positive terms. One parent described the improvements made to the school by the new headteacher as 'massive'.
- Pupils are assessed regularly and their individual progress tracked carefully. School leaders use this information very effectively to monitor pupils' progress and identify at an early stage where pupils may be falling behind. Swift and decisive action is then taken including the provision of well-targeted additional support to enable the pupils to get back on track and achieve the very challenging targets the school sets for itself and its pupils. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils are making at least good progress.
- Highly robust systems for checking on the performance of teachers and the quality of teaching, with clear links to pay progression, are now in place. This is helping to improve standards of teaching and drive up standards.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the reading, writing and mathematics is very robust and consequently, standards are rising. Systems are also in place to enable subject leaders to play a meaningful role in checking on the standards in their subjects. However, these are at an early stage and there has not been sufficient time to show their impact on pupils' learning.
- The school provides a highly enriched curriculum which stimulates pupils' interests and widens their life experiences. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their extended writing and mathematical skills in other subjects
- The curriculum contributes greatly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For such a small school it provides an impressive range of musical, artistic and sporting activities, during and after school. This shows the strong commitment the staff has to their pupils.
- Pupils also learn about other religions and cultures. Good links have been established with schools with a school in Preston and one in Uganda. The school is a prayerful community. There is a strong emphasis on personal responsibility and provides quality opportunities for personal reflection. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 took responsibility for the planning and leading a collective worship in their class. Pupils composed and shared their own personal prayers
- The effective use of the additional funding for sports provision is making a valuable contribution to the well-being of pupils by enhancing the existing excellent provision, further increasing participation, and developing staff expertise through co-coaching with sports specialists.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the associate headteacher in raising the standards of teaching and learning. It is now providing 'light touch' support for the school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance has much improved since the last inspection. Governors are highly committed to the school and are well-led. They are kept very well-informed by the school leadership and are highly knowledgeable about standards of teaching and pupil achievement in the school. They are very involved in the life in the school and have systems in place to enable them to view the work of the school first-hand. They monitor the use and impact of additional funding for pupil premium pupils and sporting provision carefully. They manage finances proficiently and ensure that pay progression is clearly linked to teacher performance. They have submitted themselves to auditing and completed training which has made them very well equipped to hold the school robustly to account.

## 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>	119680
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	426160

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>	75
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	C Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Simon Lawman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 830400
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