

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Chipping

Club Lane, Chipping, Preston, Lancashire, PR3 2QH

Inspection dates 22 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Achievement is good as it was at the previous inspection. The amount of progress that all groups of pupils make regardless of their starting points is good.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding because teachers have good knowledge of what they are teaching and give pupils stimulating work to do.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils enjoy books and read for pleasure.
- Pupils who find learning difficult receive good support so they make good progress and achieve well.
- Teachers and other adults look after pupils well. Pupils thrive in a caring and supportive environment and are happy to be in school.
- Pupils say they feel safe and their behaviour is good both in classrooms and outdoors.
- The school has strong relationships with parents who are pleased with what the school provides.
- A lively and well-planned curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to work with pupils in other schools, especially for sporting activities and the arts.
- The headteacher leads the school well. She checks teaching as well as the progress pupils are making in English and mathematics rigorously.
- The headteacher and governors work together effectively and with all the staff they have formed an efficient team to help raise standards further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Mathematics does not have a high profile in the school and pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in subjects other than mathematics.
- Teachers are not involved fully in checking pupils' progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but not all comments help pupils understand how to improve their work, nor do pupils have enough time to respond to their teachers' comments.
- Lessons do not always have a quick pace all the way through, so pupils sometimes lose concentration.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 4 teachers and visited 8 lessons which included a joint lesson observation with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- A range of the school's documentation was examined, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, documents relating to monitoring and evaluation, systems for tracking children's progress, documents regarding safeguarding and key policies.
- The inspectors took account of responses of the school's most recent questionnaire for parents.

Inspection team

Sue Sharkey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Docking

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- No pupils are supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, for children from armed service families, and for children known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2013.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed-aged classes; Reception and Years 1 and 2 together, Years 3 and 4 together and Years 5 and 6 together. The number in each year group can be less than three.
- The school has recently achieved the Silver Active Mark award and Sainsbury Active Kids.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teaching to consistently good and outstanding in order to raise achievement further by:
 - making sure that when marking pupils' work teachers regularly let pupils know what they have to learn next and allow pupils time to respond to comments
 - ensuring that teachers are involved even further in checking pupils' progress regularly
 - ensuring that the quick pace continues all the way through lessons so that pupils are fully engaged from the start of the lesson to the end.
- Improve mathematics further by:
 - making sure that the skills pupils learn in mathematics are developed fully through practical activities in a range of other subjects
 - raising the profile of mathematics throughout the whole school both indoors and outdoors to help pupils understand fully the importance of mathematics in their daily lives.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school in the reception class with skills and knowledge that are often typical for their age but due to small numbers this can vary from year to year. However children's physical development and mathematics are usually below what is expected for their age. Children settle quickly into school life and through the wide range of exciting activities in the classroom as well as outdoors they made good progress.
- The school provides children with outdoor clothing so that full use is made of the large outdoor area in all weathers. During a drizzly wet morning children thoroughly enjoyed riding their bikes around a track whilst chatting to each other or making marks on the ground with chalk. Teaching assistants talked constantly with the children, asking them questions to challenge their thinking as well as helping to develop their speaking and listening skills.
- As pupils move through Key Stages 1 and 2 they continue to make good progress. As the numbers in each year groups are very small standards by the end of Year 6 can vary. In the 2013 national tests standards were well above average and pupils' targets for 2014 indicate that this high standard should be maintained this year. All groups of pupils make good progress, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational need. This is because pupils are often taught in very small groups or individually.
- Pupils do less well in mathematics than they do in reading and writing. Throughout the school there is less evidence of mathematics, for example, through displays in the classroom or around the school, for pupils to understand fully its importance in their everyday lives.
- In the 2013 Year 6 national tests all pupils achieved expected progress. Pupils achieving more than expected progress was average in writing and mathematics whereas in reading it was well above average. More-able pupils are challenged during lessons through work planned for them as well as good questioning from teachers and teaching assistants. Targets set for 2014 show that a much higher proportion of pupils will reach the higher levels this year.
- Pupils read for pleasure and are just as keen to discuss the book they are reading in the Reception Class as they are in Year 6. Regular phonic (linking letters and sounds they make) sessions help pupils to learn to read quickly. Reception children read confidently working out words they are stuck with through sounding out the letters. By the time pupils reach Year 6 their confidence continues so that they discuss favourite authors enthusiastically. They use punctuation well, for example responding to speech marks or exclamation marks by raising their voice slightly. This helps pupils to enjoy reading as well as make it interesting for the listener.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time has been consistently good across all classes with some that is outstanding.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and work in close partnership with teachers. They take a full and active role in lessons, sometimes leading groups of pupils as well as supporting individuals within lessons or close by.
- The mixed-aged classes often mean that there is a wide range of ability within the class. However, teaching assistants are used very effectively to ensure that the progress of each group is good.
- For example, during a Years 3 and 4 lesson, pupils were developing their skills of recording information. The teacher used accurate mathematical words, explaining their meaning when needed, to make sure that pupils fully understood. Good questioning by the teacher and the teaching assistants helped to check that all groups of pupils had grasped the words, so were clear about what they had to do as well as challenging pupils' thinking. Pupils concentrated well as they used the information to complete their graph.
- Teachers are enthusiastic, using different ways to inspire and hold pupils' attention. This attention is maintained well. However, there are occasions when the pace of lessons can dip and as a result, pupils lose concentration and their learning slows down.

- Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage use the space well to provide a stimulating environment which encourages children to apply their skills and develop a curiosity about the world around them. There is a good balance between indoor and outdoor activities.
- Pupils are given opportunities to practise their basic skills in other subjects, often through writing in different ways in topic or science books. Pupils also develop their mathematical skills through science work, but they get fewer opportunities to use these skills learnt in mathematics lessons in a wider range of other subjects.
- During lessons, pupils join in enthusiastically, they work together well as a class or year group or in pairs, but are equally happy to work on their own. In a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils were looking at when to use brackets, dashes and commas. They discussed the use of each and why they would be used in books or in their own writing. Pupils individually looked in their reading books to find examples and were happy to share these, not just with the teacher, but also each other.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly making it clear to pupils how well they are doing. This can be accompanied by good praise. However, teachers do not often help pupils to know how to improve their work and pupils are not given time to respond to what their teacher has written.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Throughout the school the environment is warm and welcoming. It is evident that pupils love attending school which is why attendance is above average.
- Pupils are polite to visitors and courteous to each other and adults.
- Parents are very positive and happy with the school saying that this is an inclusive school with some pupils travelling up to 10 miles just to attend. They like the fact that staff focus on developing the 'whole child'.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well in and out of the classroom. As a result pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. There are odd occasions when pupils are silly because they don't always concentrate on what they are doing or remember always to show their very best behaviour.
- The school council organises activities and pupils are keen to raise funds for charities. During their enterprise project pupils used their own skills to raise funds for the Philippine Appeal. Pupils made and sold cakes whilst others sold potatoes they had grown, raising £800 for the appeal.
- On a different note pupils were 'over the moon' and very excited when they won the national Active Kids Competition as they then had the opportunity to meet David Beckham.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are adamant there is no bullying in school. They have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe and look after themselves out of school particularly when using the Internet. Pupils say 'teachers look after us well' and 'teachers care about us'.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher knows the school well through checking the information on pupils' progress carefully as well as the quality of teaching which is why the school's self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Teaching is led well by the headteacher who has a teaching responsibility herself.
- Having been in post since the beginning of the autumn term the headteacher has a clear picture of what must be done next. She has put in place a number of procedures including a system to check pupils' progress regularly. This is used successfully by the headteacher as the basis for improving standards, but used less well by teachers to check pupils' progress regularly from term to term and year to year.
- The headteacher, staff and governors work together closely and are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity. All staff make great efforts to make sure that all pupils get the best out of all that the school has to offer.
- The management of teachers' performance is organised well. Teachers are set clear targets based

on pupils' progress and their own professional needs as well as those of the school. There is a good link between the levels of pay and the performance of teachers over time.

- The school works effectively with other schools, especially the neighbouring school, as well as with the local authority. The local authority has provided a useful level of support while working closely with the headteacher, for example, checking pupils' work as well as further improving teaching. The school has made good use of this support.
- The curriculum is well-planned, giving pupils exciting opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed taking part in drama experiences with 500 other children at the Guild Hall Preston, whilst Year 6 pupils can take part in an annual residential visit. Parents volunteer their skills to help pupils to garden or to help with netball and pupils can take part in music activities which are well-supported.
- The school plans to make good use of the primary school sport funding by extending the opportunities pupils have to experience different sports which the school would not normally be able to offer. After school pupils can learn how to play tag rugby - a super heroes approach to football - as well as multi-skills. The school is not situated near a swimming pool so pupils from reception to Year 6 now travel to learn and develop their swimming regularly.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body takes an active interest in the school's work. It manages the school budget carefully and effectively. Governors know how the school intends to use the additional sport funding and are keen to see pupils' participation in the additional sporting activities. The governing body checks the performance of the school against other schools and is to attend training to enhance their skills in checking school information. Governors also use their skills in the classroom to help pupils improve their mathematics. Governors have an effective system to review the performance of staff, including the headteacher and decide their level of pay. The governing body ensures that health and safety requirements are met and that other safeguarding procedures are in place.

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	119643
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	440454

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Hall
Headteacher	Mary Morris
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2010
Telephone number	01995 61367
Fax number	01995 61367
Email address	head@st-marys-chipping.lancs.sch.uk

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