

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Coppull

Spendmore Lane, Coppull, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 5DH

Inspection dates 4–5 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- From their starting points, most pupils make the progress expected of them but too few make better progress than this, particularly in writing.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 are broadly average but too few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment in writing.
- Pupils do not take enough care in their handwriting. Some make too many errors in their spelling and grammar.
- The quality of teaching is too variable; not enough is good enough to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well.
- Teachers do not check carefully enough how well pupils are learning throughout lessons. This means that work is not always pitched at the correct level for their varying abilities.
- The most able pupils do not achieve as well as they can because work is sometimes too easy for them.
- Leaders do not ensure teachers use the information about pupils' progress to plan work for different groups of learners.
- Subject leaders, some of whom are new to post, are still developing their roles. They do not yet play a full part in checking that teaching and learning in their subject areas is always good nor take necessary action to respond to any dips in achievement.
- Governors do not yet challenge leaders well enough to ensure that teaching is consistently good and pupils achieve their potential.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, supported by other senior leaders, knows what needs to be done and is determined to make the school good.
- Pupils achieve well in reading and mathematics because of the good quality of provision and support they get from their teachers.
- Pupils behave well and support each other in their learning. They are very confident about how to keep safe.
- Attendance is good because pupils enjoy learning and being a part of St Oswald's.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or part lessons taught by teachers. He observed all classes being taught, as well as groups of pupils supported outside the classroom.
- The inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as talking to parents during the inspection. The inspector took account of the school's own parental surveys.
- The inspector observed teaching in a number of short reading sessions at the start of the day. He listened to pupils in Years 2 and 6 read individually and met with a group of pupils.
- The inspector spoke with five school governors and a representative of the local authority. He also spoke to school staff, including senior and subject leaders. The school's work was observed and the inspector looked at documentation, including: policies relating to safeguarding and behaviour; information on pupils' progress; attendance figures; the school's improvement planning and records of checks carried out by leaders on the quality of teaching. He observed playtimes and lunchtimes, as well as the school's website.
- Work in pupils' books was reviewed during classroom observations and the inspector scrutinised, in detail, pupils' books from Years 2 and 6.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is extra money given to schools by the government to support pupils in the care of the local authority, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families. The school currently has no pupils from service families.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and receive support through school action is average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2013 after a period of acting head. There have been a number of new appointments to the school teaching staff in recent time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is good or better by:
 - providing pupils with challenging work throughout each lesson, particularly for the most able pupils
 - making sure that teachers give pupils more time to complete their tasks and understand what a good piece of work looks like
 - increasing the pace of learning so that pupil progress is accelerated.
- Raise pupils' achievement in writing by:
 - making sure that pupils are always expected to do their best writing and to improve their handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to write across a range of subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - developing the role of subject leaders, by making sure they check up on teaching and learning in their subject areas and take effective and immediate action in response to any dips in pupils' progress
 - ensuring that leaders check teachers consistently use the information about pupils' progress to plan lessons
 - ensuring that governors work to challenge leaders' impacts on the consistency of achievement and the quality of teaching.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement. The school has had an unsettled period since the last inspection and achievement has declined. Recently however, there has been a rise in attainment which reflects in the improved performance in 2013 tests at the end of Year 6, particularly in reading and mathematics. Achievement in writing requires improvement because pupils' progress from their starting points is not consistently good across all year groups.
- Children join the school with skills and knowledge broadly expected for their age. Better teaching and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is helping children to get off to a quicker start. Although some children are now making good progress, overall the proportion of children reaching the expected level of development is similar to that expected nationally.
- Between Years 1 and 6, progress is variable between year groups. This is due to differences in the quality of teaching. These variations mean that pupils do always build well on what they already know and can do. Pupils' overall attainment at the end of Year 6 is average.
- The proportion of pupils making the expected rate of progress between Years 3 and 6 is at least average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils that do better than this is much lower than average, especially in writing. Although a trend of improvement is emerging, as seen in the higher standards reached by pupils in Year 6 in 2013, variations remain across classes, especially in pupils' quality of writing. Some pupils make basic errors in their spelling, punctuation and grammar and their handwriting is sometimes of poor quality. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects. This prevents some pupils from achieving well.
- In 2013, the proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 4 overall is similar to that expected nationally. However, too few pupils reach the higher Level 5 and 6, especially in writing. The most able pupils are only making expected progress because teachers' expectations are not high enough to help them achieve well. They are not always provided with the challenging work needed for them to reach their potential.
- Across the school, pupils achieve well in mathematics and in reading because teaching is much less variable in quality. Pupils are confident in their reading skills. Most have a good knowledge of the sounds that letters make (phonics) and know how to 'break words down' when they are unsure about new vocabulary. Pupils read a wide range of books in school and enjoy opportunities to read widely. Teachers work well in partnership with parents to improve reading skills. The best readers are fluent and read with expression.
- The additional support provided for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures that they make progress in line with that of similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium make similar progress to other pupils in the school. In 2013, the attainment of Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was about half a term behind other pupils. This gap is narrower than the national gap and for some, this represents good progress. However, their achievement overall requires improvement because it is variable between subjects. Standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar for example, were much lower than other pupils. Nevertheless, the introduction of more frequent and rigorous checks on progress by teachers and leaders is ensuring that early signs of underachievement are spotted more quickly and dealt with promptly through well delivered support sessions. As a result, gaps between the performance of eligible pupils and others are narrowing.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is uneven and requires improvement. Not enough teaching is good enough to ensure pupils make good progress in all classes and subjects.
- Pupils are not always provided with challenging work throughout lessons because teachers do not observe and check carefully enough how well pupils are learning. For example, as teachers

work with one group of pupils they do not always keep a close eye on how well other groups are learning. As a result, they miss opportunities to intervene in the learning of other pupils, especially so that the most able pupils are quickly moved on to more challenging tasks.

- The pace of learning is sometimes too slow to enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers' expectations of the quality of work that pupils are to produce, particularly the most able, is not clearly articulated or understood by the pupils.
- The teaching of writing requires improvement. In writing lessons, teachers do not ensure that pupils pay enough attention to the importance of good standards of presentation, accuracy of spelling, punctuation and grammar. Although pupils are given opportunities to write in their topic work, not enough emphasis is put on reaching a good standard of writing on these occasions.
- The teaching of reading is good. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, phonics is taught systematically so that pupils quickly develop confidence to use their phonic skills to help them with their reading. Teachers are now placing more emphasis on ensuring that pupils draw on these skills when writing, including spelling tricky words accurately.
- The teaching of mathematics has improved and pupils are making good progress. Teachers plan carefully to set tasks which offer a good level of challenge, interest and relevance. For example, in a Year 4/5 mathematics lesson, pupils were seen eagerly solving problems involving the properties of triangles. Opportunities to work both on their own and to share their ideas together enabled them to produce good quality work, and as a result, they achieved well.
- In some lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 writing lesson where pupils were developing the starting point for a story. Pupils, including the most able, produced good quality written work which they were proud of.
- The quality of marking has improved. Teachers give pupils good advice and guidance about how they are getting on and what they need to do to reach their targets, particularly in Key Stage 2.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and are proud of their school. They are dressed smartly, help keep their classrooms tidy and behave well in the dining room. As one Year 6 pupil commented, 'I have been here since Reception; the teachers have always looked after me and I have enjoyed being at St Oswald's'.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other and work hard most of the time. A few do not always try their best, such as, when a topic fails to interest them or when their work is not hard enough. Pupils are not always expected to work at a good rate and, as a result, some do not.
- Pupils are very well mannered and friendly. They are confident, articulate and enjoy talking about their work and helping with tasks in class and around the school.
- The older pupils are very effective in their roles as prefects. They are keen to take on responsibility at playtime and lunchtime when, for example, older pupils look after younger ones. Older pupils understand their responsibility to model good behaviour and safe practice. They show great maturity in ensuring younger pupils are looked after on the playground and around school. Pupils enjoy playtimes, which are very happy and secure for all. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for.
- The school's supportive set of values enables pupils to make the right choices in their behaviour, to have equal opportunities and to feel free from discrimination.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have a very good understanding of personal safety and how to stay safe during physical education and when using the internet. The school works well with a range of outside agencies to ensure the needs of all pupils are met.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and are knowledgeable about various types of bullying and danger, including the importance of not using certain websites. Pupils do not express any concerns about bullying and are happy that if they get upset about anything they can sort it out with their friends or get help from their teachers.
- Attendance has improved and is above average. A wider range of enriching opportunities, such as more trips, visits and after-school clubs are enjoyed by pupils and appreciated by parents.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher has brought much needed stability to the school's leadership. She has set high expectations for what every pupil should achieve and high standards for teaching quality and performance. Although she, along with other senior leaders, knows what needs to be done and is determined to ensure pupils achieve well, leadership and management require improvement because the roles of subject leaders are still developing. Similarly, governors are very committed to the school but they do not challenge leaders well enough to ensure that teaching is consistently good and all pupils achieve their potential.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's performance and its strengths and weaknesses. They know that achievement in writing requires improvement and that the quality of teaching is not consistently good. Improvements are already evident in pupils' learning, including in reading and mathematics, and to reduce the variability in teaching are secure indications that the leaders have the ability to improve further.
- Leaders have established a good system to track the attainment and progress of pupils. This gives a very clear picture of the achievement of individual pupils and, as a result, pupils who need additional support are quickly spotted. However, leaders do not ensure that this information is used consistently well by teachers so that they plan and provide work to meet the needs of groups of pupils, particularly the most able.
- The leadership of teaching is improving. The new staff team, including a number of teachers who are in their first year of teaching, are positive about systems to check their performance in the classroom and the emphasis senior leaders place on improving teaching. They particularly appreciate opportunities for professional development. The link between teachers' performance and progress along the pay scale is appropriate. Staff are now held to account more rigorously for their teaching quality and pupils' achievement and this is helping pupils to do better.
- The roles of subject leaders are still developing. They do not yet consistently check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. They do not use the information about pupils' progress to ensure their view of teachers' performance in the classroom reflects in the progress pupils make. As a result, they do not yet make an effective contribution to improving teaching.
- The new leadership team have worked hard to provide a more enriched curriculum. Initiatives aimed at improving opportunities for writing across the curriculum are already underway, although more needs to be done. The residential visit for Year 6 to the Lake District and the wider opportunities, including learning the guitar, and a range of additional sporting activities are greatly appreciated by the pupils. At the time of the inspection, the school choir performed in the Young Voices Choir Concert and were proud to represent their school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision promoted by the school is strong.
- The school has good links with a range of partners, including Chorley Sports Partnership (CPS) and a local cluster of catholic primary schools. The school has close links with St Oswald's Parish and regularly attend parish masses and events.
- The primary school sport funding is used well to provide additional weekly physical education lessons led by skilled sports coaches from CPS. Specialist teaching, such as that observed in Reception motivates pupils to improve their physical skills, and their health and well-being.
- The local authority has provided significant support to the school. This has been well received and, as a result, school leaders are now well placed without the current level of support.
- Partnerships with parents are strong. Parents acknowledge that improvements are being seen and the large majority are pleased with the school.
- Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding requirements are met.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - While governors are now better informed about the quality of teaching, the progress of all groups of pupils and are very supportive and keen to ask questions about what they are unclear about, they do not yet hold leaders fully to account. They do not yet challenge leaders well enough to ensure that teaching is consistently good and pupils achieve their potential.
 - Governors recently carried out a review of their own effectiveness and take part in additional training that will help them carry out their duties. This resulted in changes in procedures. For

example, arrangements to manage teachers' performance have strengthened. Governors check that performance reviews takes place regularly and that any increases in salary reflect good performance in the classroom. Even so, governors recognise that these systems are still not sharp enough to ensure consistently good teaching.

- Governors check that extra funding, including the pupil premium, is used well to benefit eligible pupils.

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	119675
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	440845

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	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Laurence Mayne
Headteacher	Elizabeth Green
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2010
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