

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Longton

Chapel Lane, Longton, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 5EB

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2014

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- This is an improving school. This is due to the drive and determination of the senior leadership team who lead by example.
- Following a good start in the Reception class, most pupils make at least good progress overall.
- By the time they leave Year 6, pupils are extremely competent readers and writers.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium, disabled pupils and those with a special educational needs make good and or better progress.
- Teaching is good because teachers encourage pupils to aim high.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work together to make sure tasks set meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- Behaviour is good. This is a caring school and pupils say they feel safe. Attendance is well above average.
- The curriculum provides an extensive range of stimulating and exciting experiences for pupils in school and beyond. They develop a love of, and excel, in the arts and sport.
- The dedicated headteacher puts into practice her great determination that all pupils should have every opportunity to flourish. All staff share this view.
- School leaders, including the governing body, work very well as a team. Their successful actions have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet consistently outstanding in all year groups.
- Work is not always adapted quickly enough when pupils find tasks easy.
- The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent across the school.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils correct their work once it has been marked to ensure that they learn from their errors.
- Some middle leaders do not have enough skills or opportunities to contribute fully to raising standards in their subject.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 14 lessons. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with school staff; groups of pupils; senior staff and leaders with responsibility for a specific subject; members of the governing body; parents and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, the development plans, records of pupils' standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour and pupils' work in their books.
- There were 59 parental responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) which the inspectors took into account alongside the responses to the school's own parental survey. Thirteen responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff were taken into account.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Emma Jackson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Oswald's is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is much lower than that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and the children of service families.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well below with that found nationally.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant improvements to the school buildings.
- The school has achieved the Activemark in Sport, Parent Partnership Award, Silver Eco School, Bronze International Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding in order to raise attainment and achievement further by:
 - quickly adapting pupils' tasks when pupils find the work easy to ensure they are always fully challenged
 - ensuring teachers' marking is of a consistently high quality to inform pupils of how they can improve their work
 - teachers allowing time in lessons for pupils to respond to their marking, particularly, but not exclusively, in mathematics
 - providing teachers and teaching assistants with more opportunities to share outstanding practice within and beyond the school.
- Improve further leadership and management by improving the skills of some middle leaders and managers in measuring the progress made by pupils and taking action to raise achievement in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Links between school, home and nurseries are excellent and this helps children settle quickly into school routines in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most children start school with skills that are similar to those typically expected for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children well for learning in Key Stage 1.
- In the 2013, Year 1 reading test, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was an improvement on the previous year and much higher than the national average.
- Published results of teacher assessments in 2012 and 2013 show that pupils make outstanding progress in reading in Key Stage 1, leading to attainment that is much higher than the national average. Progress in writing and mathematics is good, leading to standards that are higher than the national average.
- Published results of standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 show an improvement on the previous year, with pupils reaching standards in reading and writing which are well above the national average. This demonstrates excellent progress.
- Pupils have not made the same good progress in mathematics as they have in English. Last year, for instance, too few pupils made better than expected progress by the end of Year 6 and results in the national tests were broadly average.
- The school took swift action to address this and staff are receiving good quality training from a mathematics consultant who is working with the school. Currently, it looks as if pupils will attain above average standards of attainment by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good progress and some better because their different needs are quickly identified. Excellent support from teachers, teaching assistants and external agencies helps each of them to make progress in reaching their targets. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and the very few who speak English as an additional language make good progress.
- The school provides very good support for those pupils eligible for the pupil premium and this demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities. Assessment information shows that gaps in attainment between those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and their peers reduce as pupils move up through the school. In 2013, this group made better progress than their peers. In Year 6 in 2013, eligible pupils reached standards in mathematics in national tests which were similar to the national average for this group but a term behind their peers in school. Although they reached standards above similar pupils nationally in reading and writing, standards were about a term behind in writing compared to their peers in school. However, for pupils currently in the school this gap has closed.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall during their time at the school. The dip in 2013 in mathematics, when the most able pupils did achieve as well, has been addressed by the school and several pupils are now working towards Level 6 with teachers from the local secondary school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because staff encourage pupils to believe in themselves and aim high.
- Classrooms are organised well and teachers plan the content and timing of activities effectively. Resources and content often capture pupils' imagination. There is a consistent approach to making clear to pupils what they are going to learn and pupils know what is expected of them. As a result, they are eager to learn.
- This was evident in Year 5 when pupils were learning about rounding decimals to the nearest whole number. Their learning was made more enjoyable because they understood how they could use this skill when using money or measuring objects. Good progress was made by all pupils because the breadth of activities met the needs of all abilities. While some pupils were

working on a huge number line and practising placing numbers on the correct point, the most able worked on problem-solving activities.

- Work does not always match pupils' varying levels of knowledge and understanding. When pupils begin to find tasks easy, the work is not always adapted quickly enough. When this is the case pupils become easily distracted by others. Even so, teachers manage this well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in the teaching of phonics (matching letters to the sounds that they make). Those pupils who struggle to read have one-to-one support leading to rapid improvements.
- Opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills have been extended since the previous inspection. Pupils' writing in different genres is proudly displayed around the school.
- In a Year 6 English lesson, when pupils were planning to write an autobiography based on a character from a book, pupils eagerly discussed what they knew about 'Grimy Nick' from what they had read so far. Pupils went on to use role-play to take it in turns to interview the character. This helped them in independently analysing the difference between fact and inference from the text. They built up an enormous range of vocabulary, produced writing of a very high quality and made outstanding progress as a result.
- There is now a systematic approach to the teaching of mathematics across current year groups and pupils' skills in mental calculations are rapidly increasing.
- Effective teamwork by teachers and skilled teaching assistants ensures a high level of support for all groups of pupils. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff encourage children to explore their outdoor environment which helps to stimulate their learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work books regularly, but there is an inconsistency in the quality of written advice given to pupils on how to improve their work even more, especially in mathematics. Pupils are not always given time to correct and edit their work in order to learn from their mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Inspection evidence, school records and discussions with staff and pupils show that this is usual. When teaching is at its best, behaviour is exemplary. Disruptions to lessons are most unusual. However, a few pupils can become a little sidetracked when they are not concentrating well.
- Almost all parents responding to the schools' parental survey and Parent View believe that behaviour is extremely well managed and feel that their children are well cared for and safe at school. Some told inspectors that transition into the Reception class and onto secondary school was 'fantastic' and this is due to a very caring staff team.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils' understanding of different types of bullying is evident. They are confident that bullying is not tolerated at their school. Pupils feel safe in school because they know that staff care about them and they are taught how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, when they are riding their bicycles on the roads and when they use the internet in school and at home.
- 'Been seen on green' is a behaviour management system which strongly encourages pupils to choose appropriate behaviour and provides a transparent approach to the use of rewards and sanctions. It works well for pupils throughout the school.
- The older pupils take their responsibilities very seriously. For example, there is a rota for liaising with the cook and writing the lunch menu on the board each day. They are currently planning a celebration lunch, which they will cook for a retiring member of staff and approximately 50 guests.
- The primary school sport funding is used to provide additional sporting activities, including dance sessions, for pupils. Some of these activities are taught by external coaches. This helps to improve pupils' well-being as well as teachers' skills, so that they can teach a wider range of sporting activities to an even higher standard.
- The vast majority of parents make sure that their children get to school on time. What is more,

pupils' attendance is well above average, which reflects the pupils' enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher want the very best for the school and they have the expertise and determination to successfully steer the school's continued improvement. Areas for development identified at the previous inspection have been dealt with effectively. Together with the governing body, leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further development.
- Since the previous inspection, the local authority has helped the school to address a need for further improvements. In 2012-2013, a reading consultant provided phonics training for staff and this has led to rapid improvement in pupils' performance in the Year 1 phonics test. There is currently a mathematics consultant working with the school which is improving the teaching of mathematics and accelerating pupils' progress.
- Well-tailored staff training is in place to drive whole-school improvement. This is a key factor in why the quality of teaching is good and improving.
- All pupils' progress is tracked and checked closely. Meetings are held regularly by staff with responsibility for particular areas and the information about pupils' progress is used to make sure that all pupils achieve well. Some middle leaders' skills are not sharp enough in checking the progress of pupils in their subject, especially to check how well pupils use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in the various curriculum subjects.
- Teachers visit other schools, but leaders recognise the need to increase further the opportunities for teaching staff and assistants to share outstanding practice both across the school and beyond. Staff are set challenging targets which are directly linked to pay awards.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional and the curriculum meets pupils' needs well. For instance, some of the work for the most able pupils is taught by teachers from the local secondary school.
- The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of pre-school, after-school and lunchtime activities. The trophy cabinet demonstrates the many successes of the various sports teams in competitions. Hearing the choir rehearse was testament to why they achieve so many awards in competitions. Visitors to the school and trips linked to topic work provide experiences that pupils remember and talk about enthusiastically. Years 5 and 6 embark on annual residential trips and pupils have the opportunity to visit their linked school in Nimes in France.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely supportive of the school. They know its strengths and priorities because they visit school regularly and receive accurate and comprehensive reports from school leaders and staff. The governing body are determined to know what the school is like from the pupils' perspective and have introduced 'Governors in School Weeks', to understand the pupils' experience of school. Governors regularly attend training and are able to analyse data about pupils' progress, which enables them to challenge school leaders effectively. The governing body monitors the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium to confirm that their spending is effective. They also check that the new primary school sports funding is used to bring about improved access to sporting activities. Governors have an overview of the quality of teaching and how it is linked to the salary structure. They ensure that their statutory duties are met. They ensure that pupils and staff are safe, that safeguarding meets requirements and that the budget is well managed.

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	119637
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	439589

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	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr P Dineen
Headteacher	Mrs B Wood
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2009
Telephone number	01772 613402
Fax number	01772 613440
Email address	head@longton-st-oswalds.lancs.sch.uk

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