

# St Catherine's RC Primary School

Moss Lane, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 45J

**Inspection dates** 4–5 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Pupils' progress and achievement is good. This has significantly improved since the previous inspection.
- Teaching is good. Teachers want to improve their own skills and do the best for their pupils.
- Behaviour throughout the school is good. Pupils take pride in their school and want to learn.
- Pupils feel safe in the school because they feel staff know them and look after them.
- The resolute acting headteacher has set a clear steer for sustained improvement.
- Governance is strong. Governors carry out their role very effectively and have no intention of allowing the school to decline again. Morale amongst staff is high.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Not all teachers are confident in using the full range of assessment information to set work so that pupils can make swift progress from the start of each lesson.
- Plans to develop the use of information and communication technology so that pupils can enhance their independent research skills are at an early stage.
- Not all subject leader roles are fully developed in terms of checking their subject, modelling best practice and leading training.

## Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, inspectors observed eight teachers teach; listened to pupils read; scrutinised a selection of pupils' workbooks from every year group and checked the accuracy of the school's assessment information.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, with senior and middle leaders, two officers from the local authority and a group of 12 pupils. Inspectors also spoke with many pupils during break times and as they moved around the school. Several parents were asked their views on behaviour when they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school and governors' development plans, records of attendance and logs of behaviour incidents, and records of pupils' attainment and progress. They also looked at records of monitoring and evaluation activities including those relating to the quality of teaching.
- At the time of the inspection one teacher was on long term sickness absence, one on maternity leave absence and the newly appointed senior leader was on sickness absence.
- Because this was the inspector's fifth visit to the school, information from these visits was included in the evidence base.

## Inspection team

Eileen Mulgrew Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Brine

Her Majesty's Inspector

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are White British. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is very small. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is almost half the national.
- Few pupils are supported through the pupil premium. (This is extra government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils with a parent in the armed forces and those looked after by the local authority).
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In October 2012, the school was judged to require special measures. The school received monitoring visits, led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, in December 2012, March 2013, June 2013 and December 2013 to evaluate the school's progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share the strong practice in the school so that all teachers use the full range of assessment information to set tasks that enable pupils to make swift progress from the start of each lesson.
- Accelerate plans to develop the use of technology so that pupils can enhance their independent research skills.
- Develop the role of the subject leaders so that they can contribute fully to the improvement of the school through checking pupils' performance in their subject, leading training for other staff, researching and modelling best practice, and observing lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

**is good**

- Achievement is good. This is because all pupils are making swift progress in reading, writing and mathematics and attainment is rising across the school. School records show that attainment in each class is above average or almost at that level. Pupils are being well prepared for the next classes and this bodes well for future improvement. The progress of different groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic groups, is carefully checked so that any underachievement is picked up and swiftly remedied.
- Results for the Key Stage 2 tests in 2013 reflected the faster progress those pupils made in their final two terms leading to average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The attainment of the small number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium was above that of other pupils. This is due to the school's careful targeting of pupil premium funding and the positive impact of measures to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points; sometimes this is better than their peers. This is because each pupil has two targets to work on and is given support and guidance daily to help them achieve success quickly. When a target is achieved a new one is set. In this way pupils are challenged to learn well.
- The school's most-able pupils are achieving increasingly well due to well pitched activities. Some pupils said they would like to 'do harder work'; when several pupils were asked for suggestions they mentioned solving problems in mathematics, doing algebra, doing research or using technology.
- Children join the Reception class with skills that are broadly typical for their age. High-quality care and a stimulating classroom mean that children settle quickly. Exciting activities lead them to explore the world around and chatter about their new experiences. Children who joined in September have made good progress, especially in their writing, and are well on their way to being ready for Year 1.
- Pupils are responding well to the new way of learning phonics (knowledge of letters and the sounds they make). They use their new knowledge to help them to read new words and to write, including children in Reception. In 2013 the proportion who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonic screening check improved significantly from 2012; records show that a further rise is expected this year.
- The particular reasons for the drop in achievement in the Key Stage 1 2013 assessments have been tackled. As a result, pupils in the current Year 2 are making quicker progress. Similarly, action has been taken to support pupils in Year 3 to make up for the gaps from the previous year. There is scope for pupils in this class to be challenged even further, especially in mathematics, as some pupils said they would like harder work and be given more problems to solve for themselves.
- From a young age pupils read with expression and they are acutely aware of the benefits reading can bring to their lives. When asked for reasons pupils' comments included, 'To find things out', 'To learn to do something', 'To lose myself in my imagination' and 'To forget about everything'. Younger pupils use several strategies including their phonic knowledge to read and understand new vocabulary. Boys particularly like the new books which have been purchased for them and many read regularly to an adult at home.
- Pupils take part and enjoy physical education and understand about how exercise is a means to keeping healthy.

### The quality of teaching

**is good**

- Throughout the school there is a focus on learning from pupils and teachers. Through regular professional discussions teachers help and support each other. Most have good subject

knowledge as they learn from each other or find best practice in the different subjects they teach.

- In the Reception class, strong teaching and lively learning experiences enable children to become confident, happy and curious learners. For example, there was much enthusiasm and concentration when a group of pupils were learning how to measure the 'snake'; children then used their 'snake measure' to find objects longer or shorter while a second group used a ruler to measure their plastic snakes.
- Throughout the school good relationships, effective organisation and clear routines ensure that pupils feel safe, valued and ready to work.
- Displays are used to value pupils' work and to support their learning. For example, a pupil in Year 2 used the display of time connectives in writing an explanation. Other aids help pupils to work at a swift rate, for example pupils in Year 1 used 'word books' to help them spell new words rather than have to wait for the teacher to tell them.
- Teachers expect pupils to present their work neatly, using clear handwriting skills and accurate spelling, and pupils are responding well to these raised expectations; as are teachers who are improving their handwriting skills as they model correct formation to pupils.
- Problem-solving activities introduced into mathematics lessons are appreciated by pupils and the stress on using correct mathematical vocabulary is shown throughout the school. Increasingly pupils are guided to choose from a variety of resources to help them solve problems. Pupils are now expected to learn their times tables to help them to solve problems more quickly and teachers check on this with weekly tests.
- Regular and thorough marking using the 'pink' and 'green' approach is the norm throughout the school. In several classes teachers invite pupils to respond to a comment or question they have written. For example, when a pupil was asked to use strong verbs and adverbs to explain how Cinderella felt when she had to leave the ball the pupil responded with 'Cinderella rapidly dashed out into the town with her beautiful dress turning into rags.'
- Most teachers use information on their pupils' progress effectively. Progress is recorded each half term and leads to pupil progress discussion with the headteacher. When these checks show that pupils are not making as much progress as they can, extra help is given. During lessons most teachers move around the room to check that pupils understand what they are learning and to move them on if they understand while giving extra help if needed.
- On a few occasions teachers are not using all this information to set activities just at the right level from the start of a lesson which leads to some confusion for a few pupils as they do not know what to do and their learning is not as swift as it could be.
- Although on previous visits teachers have used information and communication technology to support or extend pupils' learning, on this occasion this feature of learning was not as obvious. There is scope for teachers to use technology more regularly to extend pupils' learning.
- Skilled teaching assistants make a good contribution to the learning of pupils through taking small groups of differing abilities, including more-able pupils, for starter activities or by supporting groups within the classroom.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils

is good

- Pupils wear their school uniforms smartly and are proud to belong to St Catherine's. They are polite and willingly stand aside to let adults pass through a doorway. Pupils get on with each other and with adults in the school very well. This is because they know that the adults are there to care for them and to keep them safe. Pupils feel that they are valued and they are listened to.
- Moving around the school, in the hall at lunch time and on the playground, pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have some play equipment for use on the playground but they would like more variety; plans are in place to fulfil the pupils' wishes. Likewise, now that the outside area has been extended, Year 6 pupils have drawn up plans for the area to offer more varied activities for all pupils.

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning; they want to learn because they are curious about the world and they want to please their teachers. Little time is lost during lessons and low-level disruption is rare because most pupils concentrate and get on with their work.
- Pupils say they feel safe and the school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They learn about keeping safe in several different situations and could talk in detail about learning to keep safe using the internet.
- Older pupils comment that there used to be bullying but not now. Other pupils say that bullying is rare. Pupils have a good understanding of issues around different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, or that based on bias because of race or gender. Pupils say that name-calling of this nature is minimal and teachers, especially the headteacher, deal with it and that pupils are punished. Despite the incidents being rare not every pupil spoken to felt confident that it would not happen again.
- Records of behaviour or bullying issues kept by the school reflect that pupils typically behave well. Parents, governors and staff spoken to agree that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and punctuality good. This reflects the enthusiasm pupils have to come to school and their parents' confidence in the school's work.

### **The leadership and management** is good

- The acting headteacher's determination and commitment to improvement, and the partnership with the governing body, are fundamental to the improvement of this school. She is very well - supported by the deputy headteacher as they have complementary skills and expertise. Through working with teachers, challenging them to do better and arranging good quality professional training, they have successfully improved the quality of teaching, behaviour and safety, and accelerated the progress of pupils.
- Morale amongst staff is high as they work as a team, striving to provide the best education for the pupils.
- Regular and systematic activities are carried out to check on the quality of teaching which include observing practice in the classroom, an analysis of assessment data, scrutinies of books, discussion with teachers and teaching assistants, and talking to pupils. Any weaknesses are identified, targets for improvement agreed, training opportunities organised and the headteacher quickly checks that these activities have had an effect. Consequently, the practice of established teachers and those more recently appointed has improved.
- Although there is some staff absence at senior level, other leaders have stepped up to take responsibility for English and special educational needs. Together with the established leader of mathematics, they have seamlessly continued with the work from the previous visit and so are contributing to the performance of the school.
- All teachers are responsible for leading a subject and they are enthusiastic about carrying out their role in observing in classrooms, modelling practice and leading staff training and have plans to do so. However, time is needed to allow them to show how they can improve their subject for the benefit of pupils.
- The school improvement plan is based on accurate self-evaluation. Well chosen actions within a time limit lead are leading to continuous improvement.
- Annual targets for teachers are directly linked to the school's priorities, the achievement of pupils and teachers' own individual professional development.
- The newly introduced curriculum has been enthusiastically received by pupils and teachers. Leaders have ensured that this curriculum meets the requirements of the new 2014 curriculum and so are in a secure position to move forward. Pupils study the full range of subjects which give opportunities for writing. Newly established after school and lunch time club are enjoyed by pupils.
- All aspects of safeguarding are taken seriously. The headteacher knows the parents and pupils well which results in good relationships. Many parents spoke very supportively of the school and

leadership.

- Spiritual and moral developments are based on strong beliefs and the displays around school invite pupils to reflect on their lives. Pupils know right from wrong. They get on well socially as shown in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children were quickly sharing and taking turns. The Year 6 children act as prefects to look after other pupils. Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity is slightly less well developed.
- The school has used the sports funding to invest in a package provided by a sports partnership. This has included staff training for the new 2014 curriculum; and a wide variety of skills sessions for pupils and staff. The aim is to use this coaching to develop staff expertise in areas staff feel less confident.
- Local authority involvement in the school has eased away as the school has improved. Support has been given to successfully strengthen particular aspects of teaching. The local authority has a plan in place to ensure the school continues to make rapid progress.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has improved significantly and it is now very effective in ensuring the school continues to improve. Through effective training, strong leadership from the new Chair of the Governing Body and increased expertise through new appointments, members are very well organised and understand their role. Governors use visits to school and links with subject leaders and classes to build up their knowledge of the school. With the more detailed reports from the headteacher they are in a strong position to ask searching questions of the decisions taken by leaders. With the support of the diocese, governors have invested substantial funds in the extension and re-furbishing of the Early Years Foundation Stage area and the playground area. This has led to more appropriate space for the younger pupils and their learning is accelerating. Plans are in place for pupils to choose what equipment they would like on the playground. Governors have their own action, monitoring and evaluation plan which links to the school development plan. As they check on the school's progress they check on their own contribution and colour code it so they can plot their progress as well as that of the school. Governors make sure that the pupil premium funding is used for those pupils for whom it is intended and they pay special attention to the emotional well-being of this group of pupils. Governors check on the safeguarding systems in the school.

## 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>	119585
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	432365

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.

<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>	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Josie O'Brien
<b>Acting headteacher</b>	Barbara Coulton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 423767
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