

# St John Southworth Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson

Lomeshaye Road, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 0DQ

## Inspection dates

6–7 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- Standards at Year 6 in 2013 were below average and progress was slow.
- The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is not always good enough, which hampers the progress of some pupils.
- Not enough pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils are not enabled to develop their numeracy skills fully by using them to solve mathematical investigations.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 are behind others in reading, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Information about pupils' progress is not always used effectively to ensure work is set at the right level for all abilities.
- Teaching assistants have been restricted in their ability to develop their skills.
- The leadership team is new and members are still gaining the experience and skills required to remove the inconsistencies in teaching.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors manage staff well and are reducing the underperformance in Key Stage 2. The school is steadily improving and is well placed to continue to do so.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well from starting points that are typically below expectations for their age.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. They reach standards at Year 2 that are average, and above average in writing.
- The school is a safe, secure and welcoming community. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together, playing and working alongside one another in harmony.
- The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is improving as staffing disruptions diminish.
- The commitment and dedication of the teaching assistant team is commendable.
- A wide range of activities extends pupils' knowledge of the world and promotes good spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors saw teaching in all classes. They observed one assembly and nine lessons and part lessons, including four observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school, in the playground and at lunchtime.
- Discussions were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff including the teaching assistant team. A discussion was conducted with two representatives of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed many aspects of the school's work, including supervision and support for pupils who need extra help. They listened to pupils read, and examined pupils' work in their exercise books and on classroom and corridor wall displays.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including: plans for the school's future development; the school's use of sport funding and the pupil premium; the school's arrangements for keeping pupils safe; pupils' attendance records; minutes of governing body meetings; records of how the quality of teaching is checked and information about the achievement and progress of pupils across the school.
- The views of parents were taken into account by considering the 26 responses to the online Parent View survey. In addition, there was an open meeting with some parents at the beginning of day two of the inspection and account was taken of two letters given to the inspection team.
- Staff views were evaluated by analysing questionnaires completed by 30 staff members and discussions with staff throughout the inspection.

## Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary.
- The very large majority of pupils are of Asian Pakistani background; an increasing number of pupils are joining the school with Eastern European backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high in comparison with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- There is a relatively high turnover of pupils, with an above-average number joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times.
- In 2013, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The governing body manages the before- and after-school care in the school.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been some significant changes in staff. The current headteacher and his deputy both took up their posts in September 2013.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - making better use of all available information about what pupils already know and can do to make sure that work is at the right level to stretch the most able pupils
  - deepening the pupils' understanding of their own achievement and what they need to do, over the longer term, to reach higher standards
  - focusing more closely on the achievement of pupils supported through the pupil premium
  - making sure all pupils enjoy lessons and pay attention at all times.
- Increase the impact of leaders and managers at all levels by:
  - developing the leadership skills of the new middle leaders in order to sustain the current rapid improvement in progress
  - strengthening the school's strategy for boosting the progress of the most able pupils across the school
  - supporting teaching assistants in their desire to develop their skills so as to be better able to help pupils to reach their potential.
- Accelerate pupils' rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that standards improve to above average by:
  - raising expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving in each subject
  - giving pupils more frequent opportunities to use and apply their numeracy skills to solve mathematical investigations
  - devising and implementing strategies to improve the spelling, grammar and punctuation of

pupils in Key Stage 2.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

#### requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress in Key Stage 2, until recently, has been slow and standards have been below average. The school has taken action to remedy this situation.
- Improvements are underway in Key Stage 2. The school's progress data provide evidence of rapidly improving progress in Key Stage 2 since September 2013. Standards at Year 6 are already meeting the minimum expectations set by the government in reading, writing and mathematics and progress is better than expected.
- A legacy of underachievement remains, however. Standards are still, at best, average in reading, writing and mathematics; the most able pupils are not yet making consistently good progress and standards in spelling, punctuation and grammar are below average at Key Stage 2.
- Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of development that, for most, are below typical for their age. Good teaching ensures that they make rapid improvements and by the time they start Year 1, standards are just above average. The good progress continues in Key Stage 1. Assessments at Year 2 are typically average or just above. In 2013, standards in writing were well above average, reflecting the gathering success in helping pupils develop skills in English speaking, spelling and writing.
- Pupils get off to a good start in reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. They learn the sounds that letters make (phonics) very well. The good quality of teaching resulted in an above-average proportion of Year 1 pupils reaching the required standard in the 2013 phonics screening check. This strength contributes to rising standards in writing at Year 2 but is too recent to impact fully on writing results at the end of Year 6.
- The weak performance and rate of progress at Key Stage 2 in 2013 were due to the negative impact of considerable staff turbulence and the influx of a significant number of pupils to Year 6 with no knowledge of English. The percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 was below average.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from good support. They make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, usually reach standards that exceed those of similar pupils nationally but remain below the national average for all pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make progress that matches that of others. In 2013, pupils of Pakistani origin gained higher standards than other significant groups of pupils but this is not always the case from year to year. Recent improvements to strategies for supporting pupils joining the school who speak English as an additional language are boosting the progress of these pupils.
- The pupil premium funding is used in a variety of ways, for example, to equip pupils who need it with a sports kit or to help with costs of attending breakfast and after-school clubs. It also enables staff to give one-to-one or small-group support. This is helping the majority of pupils in receipt of the grant to improve their progress and narrow the gap between their knowledge and that of their classmates. In 2013, their attainment at Year 6 was similar to that of other pupils in writing and mathematics but below the achievement of others in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar.

### The quality of teaching

#### requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because over time, progress at Key Stage 2 has been slow and standards have been lower than they should be. The disruptions to the teaching team in 2012 and 2013 that impacted negatively on the quality of teaching have now largely been resolved; the progress in Key Stage 2 is accelerating rapidly.
- Teachers and support staff demonstrate the ability and willingness to improve and refine their classroom practice. They work well together as a tightly knit team and are supportive of each

other. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils in all aspects of school life, which supports pupils' learning. There is a strong focus on building the pupils' confidence and ability to work with others.

- Lessons are interesting and, as a result, pupils usually listen carefully and work hard. Pupils' progress in lessons is checked by constantly probing their understanding through questioning and discussion. When pupils struggle with their learning, they are quickly noticed and provided with help.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 teaching is good and there are some outstanding elements. A wide range of interesting and highly relevant activities captures the children's interests while learning both indoors and out. Children benefit from a spacious and stimulating environment, which is very imaginatively used.
- In Key Stage 2, there are times when the expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. This is because information relating to pupils' progress is not used effectively to make sure pupils are stretched enough. As a result, some pupils, but in particular the most able, are not doing as well as they could and so, at times, they also become disaffected in lessons.
- In mathematics, all pupils, but especially the most able, have insufficient opportunity to improve their standards by applying their calculation skills to solve mathematical problems in a wide variety of situations. Weaknesses from the past in aspects of spelling, grammar and the use of punctuation hold back standards reached in aspects of reading and writing at Key Stage 2. The school is aware of this and staff are working hard to close these gaps in pupils' knowledge.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the pupils' education. Their efforts go a long way to including all pupils equally, and in particular pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, in all aspects of school life. Gaps in their training, however, reduce their ability to support some pupils in their academic achievement.
- The quality of marking has improved since the previous inspection. There are some good examples in which pupils quickly follow up on the advice provided to them. Most pupils know how to improve and have targets to guide them. Pupils do not consistently have a deep enough understanding of their own achievement. Many are unsure of what to do, over the longer term, for them to reach higher standards.

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

### **requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In some lessons, a minority of pupils lose concentration and stop working for short periods. This is because they are not consistently enabled to work at a standard that maintains their interest.
- The great majority of pupils show positive approaches to learning. Pupils encourage one another to do their best. The school works hard to create a welcoming family atmosphere in which every pupil is valued as an individual. Pupils from a wide range of cultural and ethnic backgrounds get on extremely well and respond very positively to the school's efforts to value everyone.
- The pupils' voice is valued. Pupils are proud of being school councillors and representing the school on the Pendle Pupil Parliament. Pupils take on roles as house captains and prefects and willingly help in organising a wide range of activities in and around the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Break times are well supervised and there are a number of activities for the pupils to take part in. These are often organised by the pupils themselves in their capacity as playground leaders.
- Pupils understand types of bullying, such as those connected to race, name calling, homophobic actions and risks involved in using the internet. Pupils are adamant that bullying is rare and say that it is not a problem at their school. They are very confident that any rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with effectively.
- The school premises are very safe and behaviour policies are in place. They are understood by all pupils and are consistently applied.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who gave an opinion, or who spoke to the inspectors, felt that their children are safe and happy at the school.

- The school has established close working relationships with outside agencies and effectively supports vulnerable pupils and their families. This success has been due to the efforts of the pupil and family support worker engaging with families. This has raised the importance of attending school regularly. Absence has reduced quickly over the last three years and attendance is now average and improving.

## **The leadership and management**

## **requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because there is still a legacy of underachievement and some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2.
- The headteacher and his deputy have the energy and skills to secure the school's continued improvement. Together with the new senior leadership team, and strong governing body, they have stopped the decline in achievement at Key Stage 2. Higher expectations are being set for the performance of pupils and slow progress is now not acceptable. All information about the impact of teaching on learning is evaluated in order to ensure that the most effective strategies are adopted to raise standards.
- All staff are supportive of one another. Their morale is high, and teachers and teaching assistants display a good commitment to improving their professional skills. Increasingly, the strong teaching that exists within the school is used to raise the quality of practice of all staff.
- There are strengths in the leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and the provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs. In Key Stage 2, rapid change is being brought about. New initiatives led by the deputy headteacher, for example in approaches to supporting pupils who speak English as an additional language, are raising standards. Leadership of what is provided for the most able pupils is not yet effective enough.
- The use of attainment and progress data has improved significantly because of the appointment of a senior leader responsible for gathering information about all pupils across the school. Regular meetings between staff are scheduled to evaluate individual pupils' progress and identify any who are not making the progress expected of them. Where required, additional support is given to pupils who are falling behind.
- Information gathered from lesson observations and the analysis of the data about how well each pupil is learning help to set targets for teachers' performance. Teachers are now accountable for ensuring good progress for the pupils in their class. The success of achieving this is linked to progression up the pay scale. Regular meetings between senior leaders and teachers review the quality of teaching and the training needs for staff.
- The development of the skills of teaching assistants has not had the high focus required to enable them to constantly develop their skills and contribute fully to pupils' learning.
- Pupils are enabled to learn a variety of subjects although the emphasis is on reading, writing and mathematics. Regular access to learning in the natural environment, using the school grounds, widens the pupils' experiences of the wider world. Pupils can access a range of clubs and additional activities that boost the pupils' interest and imagination. Themed days, such as a pirate day and World Book Day, add interest to pupils' learning.
- The additional primary school sport funding is allocated effectively to extend pupils' involvement in competitive sports and improve opportunities to develop their skills, for example in gymnastics. The fund is managed by a very competent sports leader and has successfully raised pupils' understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- The local authority offers expert advice and support. Its actions have bolstered the impact of the new headteacher and senior leaders by, for example, strengthening the use of assessment to check on the progress of pupils and working to raise the quality of teaching where it requires improvement.
- The school works well with parents who are from a number of different ethnic backgrounds. Parents are welcomed to school and given guidance about how to get involved in their children's education. The very large majority of parents rate the school highly and would recommend it to others. A minority registered concerns regarding the appropriateness of homework and would



like better information about what is expected.

- Effective partnerships with a variety of organisations benefit the pupils' education. The school has close links with the local church and mosque communities, working with families to support their home faiths.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has successfully supported and guided the school through a period of significant change in staffing and leadership. A good and experienced Chair of the Governing Body has secured a strong leadership team and raised the quality of teaching. The governing body has established procedures that link teachers' performance and salary scale progression.
- Individual governors have specific areas of responsibility which ensure they are fully involved in the life of the school. They have benefited from much clearer information about the performance of pupils in the school. Governors now receive comprehensive information from the school relating to the quality of teaching in the classroom and the standards and progress of pupils. The governors are knowledgeable about how the school's performance compares with that of other schools, both locally and nationally.
- All members have undergone the required statutory training. They check on the school's finances, including the additional primary school sport funding; they are clear about how the pupil premium funding is spent and its effect on the pupils' achievement.
- The governing body fulfils its duties in securing the safeguarding of 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119655
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	431972

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>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	209
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Pauline Firman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Higgins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 613906
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