

St Edward's Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackburn

Blackburn Road, Darwen, Lancashire, BB3 0AA

Inspection dates

11–12 March 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		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a downward trend in pupils' achievement. For example, in 2013 a below average proportion of pupils made expected progress in mathematics and writing. In writing, a well below average proportion made more than expected progress.
- Over a two-year period, the quality of teaching has been inconsistent and has not been good enough to ensure that pupils made good or better progress in their studies. For example, lesson content and activities have not always been matched closely enough to the needs of different groups of pupils.
- The challenge for the most-able pupils has been inconsistent and not always enabled them to reach the standards of which they capable.
- Assessment strategies to monitor the progress of pupils are not yet fully embedded.
- Staff have not always been fully aware of when pupils were falling behind.
- Occasionally, pupils' progress slows because they insufficiently learn from each other.
- There is further scope for pupils to reinforce their writing skills in all the subjects they study.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior team lead by example. They have put in place well founded strategies to improve the quality of teaching.
- As a result, teaching and assessment are now much better and pupils' achievement is improving rapidly. In both Years 5 and 6, for example, progress is accelerating and an increasing proportion of pupils is now making the progress expected. Indeed, a greater proportion is now making better than expected progress.
- Pupils continue to behave well. They are proud of their school and feel safe within its walls. The school's work to ensure that its pupils are safe and secure is outstanding.
- The support for autistic pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is impressive. The support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also of a high order.
- Governors know the school well and hold leaders to account with rigour.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 part-lessons. They attended the breakfast and after-school clubs and also visited a choir rehearsal on Tuesday lunchtime.
- Inspectors spoke to three groups of pupils, including school councillors and members of the chaplaincy team. They also spoke informally to pupils at breaks and lunchtimes and during their visits to the breakfast- and after-school clubs.
- They held discussions with eight governors, including the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. In addition, they spoke to the special educational needs coordinator, the leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage, the mentor for pupils supported by the pupil premium, teaching assistants, subject coordinators and the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire. They also met informally with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and considered a range of documentation, including internal and external pupils' progress and attainment data, the school's view of its own performance, school development planning and minutes of governing body meetings. They also scrutinised documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

James Kidd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Emily Wheeldon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school, with slightly more girls than boys.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below that usually found.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (extra money for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority) is below average. There is a much greater proportion of these pupils in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are few pupils with English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been some changes in staff deployment since the previous inspection, with some teachers now teaching in different years.
- The school is a nationally accredited Healthy School and is currently working towards local Healthy Eating School certification. The school also holds Eco-School (Silver) status. There are breakfast and after-school clubs administered by the governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding, in order to accelerate pupils' achievement further by:
 - matching lesson content and activities more closely to the needs of different groups, in order to ensure that all pupils make good or better progress in their studies and that a greater proportion makes more than expected progress
 - ensuring that the challenge for the most able is consistently rigorous enough to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable
 - embedding the strategies in assessment already established to monitor the progress of all pupils from their starting points
 - ensuring that ongoing assessment in class is consistently good enough to identify when pupils are falling behind in their learning
 - giving pupils even more opportunities to learn from each other
 - continuing to provide pupils with opportunities to reinforce their writing skills in all the subjects they study.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children generally enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge below the expectations for their age. They make good progress both academically and personally in the setting and reach broadly average standards by the time they reach Year 1.
- Since the previous inspection, however, progress has slowed in both Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, and in 2012 and 2013, attainment by the end of Year 6 was broadly average overall, with standards in writing the least impressive. A below average proportion of pupils made expected progress in writing and mathematics and the proportion making more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics was lower than seen nationally. Over time, therefore, pupils' achievement requires improvement, even though three pupils attained National Curriculum Level 6 in mathematics in 2013.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is improving. Pupils now read fluently and with understanding and they use times tables accurately to solve mathematical problems. They are writing more confidently, too, and enjoy making up their own stories.
- As a result of more accurate and more regular assessment of pupils' progress and better teaching, achievement across Key Stage 2 is also beginning to accelerate and the most able are now approaching the standards their ability warrants. Increasing numbers of pupils are now making expected progress and in Year 5 in particular, the proportion making better than expected progress is now approaching the national average.
- Again, pupils enjoy reading and in Year 6, for example, they discuss several methods to use when faced with the pronunciation of complex words with more than three syllables. They read aloud with expression and confidence.
- Progress in writing is also rising and in the current Year 6 class, there are examples of work at Level 6, which is displayed prominently on the corridor wall, both to celebrate success and to motivate other pupils to reach the same standard.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and in Year 5 they calculate percentages of large numbers with accuracy and in Year 6, they are fascinated by the relationships between numbers in sequence.
- Autistic pupils, disabled pupils and those special educational needs receive strong support from teaching and teaching assistants. They are also making better progress and attaining just as well as their classmates.
- The small numbers of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make a judgement on their attainment and progress compared to those of others difficult. However, in 2013 both pupils in Year 6 made expected progress in reading and mathematics and reached broadly average standards in these subjects.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, since the previous inspection it has not been good enough to ensure that pupils made good or even better progress in their studies.
- However, as a result of the school's overriding concern to improve the quality of teaching, it is now much better with examples of outstanding teaching in Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- In the Reception class, for example, children learn well and on occasions exceptionally well in the stimulating outdoor area. They are also becoming fluent and confident speakers as a result of the excellent language skills modelled by the teachers and support assistants.
- All groups of pupils progress well when the work and classroom activities are matched closely to their different abilities. Where this is not the case, progress slows and, on occasion, some pupils fall behind. This teaching does not enable pupils to make more than expected progress in their

studies.

- Similarly, when ongoing assessment is sharp enough to identify where pupils are experiencing difficulty, approaches are adjusted and pupils' progress is enhanced. Where this is not the case, a minority of pupils finds the work too difficult and their progress suffers as a result.
- The challenge for the most able pupils is generally good, but is inconsistent across the school. In Year 6, for example, the most able were motivated by the consideration of the work of Dattaraya Ramchanda Kaprekar, a famous Indian mathematician who completed research on the relationships between numbers. However, occasionally the most able pupils do not have work that makes them think more deeply about the subject matter and thus reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The school currently places emphasis on encouraging pupils to learn for themselves, and from each other, for example, through paired and group discussion. Where such activities are used effectively to reinforce pupils' understanding, progress accelerates. On occasions, however, these opportunities are missed.
- Teaching assistants work well with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils, and autistic pupils too, can take full advantage of what the classroom activities have to offer.
- Similarly, the pupil premium mentor provides weekly individual support to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This support is tailored closely to their needs and enables these pupils to make the same progress as others.
- Pupils gain a clear understanding of how to improve their work through regular and thorough marking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their conduct in lessons is good overall and, on occasion, outstanding. They are keen to learn and to work hard, enjoy their lessons and speak highly of the adults who work with them. There is some low-level misbehaviour in class, but pupils say that this is rare and that teachers stop it quickly when it occurs. Children behave well in the Reception class: they play and learn happily together.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibility and older pupils, prefects for example, support younger ones, for example by taking them into the playground at lunchtime. School councillors represent the views of their constituents well and members of the pupil chaplaincy team say 'We are trying to make our school even more religious.' They organise a variety of charity events and were actively involved in raising nearly £300 for the Macmillan Cancer appeal.
- The school's work to ensure that its pupils are safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel safe in school and have a keen understanding of how to keep themselves safe when they are not in school. They value the support they receive from the adults who work with them and comment, 'The grown-ups look after us and know we can talk to them when we are feeling unhappy.' All parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire believe their children are safe and happy in school and would recommend the school to other parents. Parents are particularly pleased with the support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Pupils are fully aware of how to use the Internet responsibly and safely. They know the dangers of using social media websites and also of cyber-bullying. Indeed, they believe that bullying in school, including name-calling and bullying based on prejudice is rare and that when it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils demonstrate an enviable social conscience, know the difference between right and wrong and get on well with each other. They enjoy being part of the choir and their singing is a delight to hear.
- Their understanding of cultures and religions which are different from their own is enhanced by the strong link with a local Muslim school. They receive visits from pupils from this school and

also visit the school themselves.

- In addition, the school delivers tuition in modern languages. Year 6 learns German, Year 5 learns Spanish, Year 4 learn Italian and Year 3 learns French. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of after-school clubs and educational visits, to the Jodrell Bank Discovery Centre, for example.
- Attendance continues to be above average and pupils invariably arrive at school punctually.

The leadership and management are good

- The dedicated and talented headteacher and deputy headteacher lead by example. They have tackled with success a range of staffing issues and inaccuracies in assessment, which led to a downward trend in pupils' achievement. As a result, teaching is improving, assessment systems, although not yet fully embedded, are now more rigorous and pupils' progress is now accelerating apace.
- Leaders are fully aware that there is not yet enough outstanding teaching and that, although increasing, there is an insufficient proportion of pupils making more than expected progress.
- Staff morale is strong and teaching and non-teaching staff at all levels of experience and responsibility, speak positively of the senior leadership. In their words, 'We feel valued here: senior leaders are rigorous and challenging but also fair.'
- Middle leaders are effective. They are also grateful for the encouragement they receive to develop the areas for which they are responsible. They, too, rightly believe that performance appraisal arrangements are secure and that they lead to relevant in-service training opportunities, attended by all staff, which are designed to enhance classroom practice and thus benefit the pupils in their care. The improvements in teaching are a direct result of this well founded training.
- The curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils well. Learners enjoy the 'theme' activities, which also lead to a wide range of educational visits. Pupils now have more opportunities to practise their writing skills across the curriculum, but the school recognises that this could be developed further. The breakfast and after-school clubs are well run and well attended. Pupils enjoy the variety of activities and have warm relationships with the staff.
- The school is ever concerned to ensure that the primary school sport funding is used to promote higher participation rates among pupils in games and physical activity. It employs three sports coaches who work with staff to deliver activities during and after school in sport and games. In addition, a local professional runs an after-school dance club for 30 weeks during the year. There is a wide range of after-school sports clubs and, for the first time, the school has a girls' football team, which takes part in local competitions.
- Child protection and safeguarding policies and practice fully meet current requirements and are a major strength of the school. The 'purple files', held in every class, ensure that the personal and emotional development of each individual child is monitored closely and that any pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable are supported to the hilt. The school rejects discrimination in all its forms and now supports equality of opportunity well.
- The local authority provides good support for the school. It funds termly support from a School Improvement Partner and a local authority officer continues to be actively involved in helping the school to improve the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The experienced governing body knows the school well and continues to challenge the leadership with rigour. Members are fully aware of how pupil premium funding is used and keep a close eye on its impact on the progress and attainment of pupils known to be eligible for support through it.
 - Governors have spent much time considering just why achievement declined since the previous inspection and liaised fully with the headteacher to ensure that staffing issues were tackled and that teachers were deployed in the right years to maximise pupils' progress. This close collaboration with senior leaders is now bearing fruit and pupils' achievement is

accelerating rapidly.

- The headteacher and senior staff have delivered training to the governing body on how to ask questions of the internal and national data on pupils' progress and attainment. As a result, governors are fully aware of trends in achievement.
- The governors also monitor closely the school's attempts to improve the quality of teaching and ensure that teachers receive financial reward only if they meet their targets in relation to pupils' progress.

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	119666
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	433898

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	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Leatham
Headteacher	Gerard Keane
Date of previous school inspection	19 January 2011
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