

# St Antony's RC Primary School

Shadsworth Road, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB1 2HP

**Inspection dates** 29–30 April 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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		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

- Since the previous inspection, pupils' reading and writing skills have improved, but they are still not good enough.
- Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, although improving, remain below average, particularly in reading and writing.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to use their writing skills in different subjects, such as religious education and history.
- The most able pupils are not given sufficiently hard work, particularly when practising their basic skills.
- The quality of the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and, as a result, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work further.
- Leadership and management require improvement because subject leaders are not given enough chances to lead on important matters, such as monitoring learning and teaching.
- Leaders do not check and evaluate teachers' work and the school's performance rigorously enough.

### The school has the following strengths

- Mathematics is taught well.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle well, enjoy their learning, and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is usually thoughtful and respectful.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school has welcomed and supported a large group of pupils from Poland and they have settled well and are making good progress in their communication skills.
- There has been an overall improvement in the school's performance, including in attendance and a reduction in the proportion of pupils who are frequently absent.
- There are many opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- The school is successful in competitive sports. Pupils' skills are very well developed in physical education and sports lessons.
- The governing body is improving, particularly in the way that it holds leaders to account for the progress pupils make.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited all classrooms and observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons. The lead inspector was joined by the headteacher in one lesson.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, groups of pupils, senior leaders, subject leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors closely examined and analysed the school's own documentation about pupils' progress, policies relating to safeguarding and the action plans for current and future development. They carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work in the books of several classes.
- Informal discussions were held with pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6.
- There were 12 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and these were taken into account.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

John Heap, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Webster

Additional Inspector

Carol Machell

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Around half of the pupils in the school are eligible for the pupil premium and this is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- There is a large group of Polish pupils; many of whom have joined the school recently.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or by a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets 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 school offers a breakfast and after-school club each day.

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

- Improve teaching to at least good and so increase pupils' progress, particularly in reading and writing, by:
  - providing many more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills, particularly writing, across the full range of subjects
  - giving the most able pupils more challenging work so that they move on further in their learning
  - sharpening the quality of marking so that pupils have a clear view of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management, especially the quality and sharpness of school self-evaluation and improvement planning, by:
  - gathering information in systematic way so that the school's strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified and understood
  - improving the skills of subject leaders, so that they can do more to check what the school does, how successful it is and what it needs to do to improve further
  - carrying out more regular checks on teaching quality and ensuring that effectiveness in the classroom is clearly linked with teachers' salary progression.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Although there have been improvements over the last two years, achievement requires improvement because:
  - improvements in attainment, particularly in reading and writing, have not been sustained over a long enough period
  - the development of pupils' literacy skills is not consistent in all classes
  - the most able pupils are not always given work which is hard enough; consequently, they are not challenged to use their skills and abilities to the full.
- At the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was low in 2012 and below average in 2013. In the current Year 2, standards of attainment are higher than in previous years with the most able pupils reaching higher than average levels of attainment, particularly in mathematics.
- By the end of Year 6, results in national tests show pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was low in 2012 and, while it was still below average in 2013, attainment was higher than it was the year before. The school's own data shows the attainment of current pupils is rising towards the average, and school records and work in pupils' books indicate that they are on track to achieve better results this year.
- Achievement in mathematics is stronger than in it is in reading and writing. In mathematics, pupils have many opportunities to use their skills in the work they do in other subjects, such as in science, for example. Talking with pupils and looking at their books shows that they have confidence and insight into how they can solve problems. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, for instance, the most able pupils showed a lot of confidence when solving money problems and giving guidance to others.
- Pupils' progress in writing is slower because they do not have sufficient opportunities to write in different subjects, and the quality of their spelling, punctuation and sentence construction is variable. Nevertheless, some good work was seen in a Year 4 class, where pupils were learning to edit their own work; there was a strong emphasis on using correct everyday English while reading a fictitious police report.
- Pupils say they enjoy reading and the school supports younger pupils through strong work in developing knowledge and skills in learning letters and linking them to their sounds. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils progressed well when dealing with the challenging 'i' sound, as in 'igh', 'm-ke' and 'y'. Most pupils showed that they recognised the various spellings and were clear about technical terms such as 'digraphs'. Pupils can explain that they like authors such as Roald Dahl and teachers provide keen and enthusiastic readings from his and other authors' books and this helps pupils to develop an enjoyment of books and stories.
- Pupils who require extra help with their learning are progressing well. They receive good support and this is leading to better outcomes. In Years 3 and 4, for example, nine out of the 12 pupils given extra help made better than expected progress.
- Pupils who receive free school meals are eligible to receive extra funding and support. In 2013, these pupils reached similar standards in writing to their peers in school and to similar pupils nationally, and were just a little way behind their in-school peers in reading and mathematics. Current data shows that eligible pupils currently on roll are progressing well.
- Pupils who do not always speak English at home settle in well at school and have comparable communication skills with others in the class. The extra support provided by the school for pupils from Polish backgrounds, in Years 1, 2, 3 and 6, is proving to be successful. Many of these pupils are making good gains in their learning and there is often an accuracy and clarity in the way they express themselves.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress. They enter Nursery with skills and abilities that are well below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and social skills. However, records show that around three-quarters of the children achieved a good level of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

**The quality of teaching requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because there are still some inconsistencies in the way that pupils' work is marked. The quality of marking is improving, but not at the same rate in every classroom. Mainly, the marking does not provide pupils with a clear enough picture of what they need to do next to do better and learn more. While talking to a group of Year 6 pupils it became clear that they knew how much progress was expected, but they could not explain what they would need to do to fulfil these expectations.
- Over time, teaching has not been good enough to enable pupils to make consistently good progress. This is now changing and there is clear evidence of more good teaching in the school. In addition, there are now more checks on classroom work and pupils' achievement, including checking pupils' books.
- Pupils who find learning to be difficult receive helpful, and sometimes challenging, support from the often generous number of learning support assistants. The help provided by these learning support assistants can be particularly effective, especially when they have a clear plan for what they are doing which enables them to assist pupils in their next steps of learning.
- Mathematical skills are taught well; in mathematics lessons and in other subjects, particularly Year 6 science work.
- There have been improvements in teachers' use of probing questions to check on pupils' levels of understanding. As a result, pupils think more fully about their learning. Teachers guide staff towards those who need specific help. In mathematics in Year 6, for example, the teacher probed pupils' knowledge and understanding about probability by effective questioning which highlighted any misconceptions in pupils' thinking. This allowed the teacher to adjust teaching and explanations to meet pupils' needs.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is typically good and the children make good progress from their low levels of knowledge and understanding on entry. Activities are well-planned and capture the interests of the children, as in a Nursery activity where the children were matching a sound to the correct animal. Staff provided a good example in their use of language and this helped to improve speaking skills and encourage the development of independent thinking.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Since the previous inspection, attendance has improved and is currently just below the national average. There is also a marked reduction in the proportion of pupils who are persistently away from school. Leaders and managers have become much tougher on this matter and it is working, for instance, through following up individual's absences by telephone and letter. The attendance of pupils who receive the pupil premium funding has also improved significantly. The school also provides rewards for those pupils who achieve and maintain a high level of attendance.
- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- This is much appreciated by the small number of parents who replied to the online questionnaire and those that met with inspectors during the inspection.
- In lessons, behaviour is mostly good and, on occasions, outstanding. Pupils from several classes told inspectors that there is very little disruption to learning. Around the school, in the playground and in the hall, there is little evidence of any poor behaviour.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well by the school. As a result pupils are courteous and thoughtful to the feelings of other pupils, staff and visitors. Any minor lapses are dealt with immediately. One pupil said, 'I came to the school in Year 3 and it was easy to make friends.'
- Behaviour is judged to be good rather than outstanding because:

- there is a very small amount of evidence of immature behaviour in the corridors
- a very small minority of lessons have some low-level disruption when pupils are not fully involved or the tasks lack challenge
- a few staff in their questionnaire returns disagreed that behaviour was good.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils understand the term 'bullying'. They know that this can include fighting and most pupils spoken to had some idea of a wider definition, including verbal attacks and cyber-bullying. They say that bullying is a rare occurrence and is dealt with swiftly.
- Parents feel that their children are safe, happy and secure.
- Across the range of pupil groups which met with inspectors there is evidence of pride in the school. However, there is also clear evidence that pupils have their own ideas about how the school can improve, such as the following ideas from the school council; better playground equipment; new reading books; and more project work in lesson time.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children settle swiftly and behave well in the space open to them. A key feature in this is the good level of care, attention and guidance provided by the motivated staff.
- Children and families benefit from the breakfast and after-school clubs that are provided by the governing body.

## The leadership and management

## requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have acted on the recommendations from the previous inspection report and useful action and development plans have been developed in response. Consequently, there have been improvements in pupils' progress, the quality teaching, and pupils' attendance. Nevertheless, there is still more improvement needed to raise the standard of teaching and pupils' achievement to good.
- Leadership and management are not yet good because the subject leaders are under-used and are not having specific skills developed. Furthermore, there is only a little evidence of the school checking its own strengths and weaknesses in a carefully planned and systematic way. Targets are set for teachers and there is an emphasis on raising pupils' achievement and improving teaching quality. However, some staff have not had their work checked regularly enough and there does not appear to be a clear link between the effectiveness of teachers' work and their salary progression.
- The curriculum offers a broad range of subjects and activities, and provides many opportunities for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, but there are too few chances for pupils to use their literacy skills in different subjects.
- Primary school funding for sport is being used effectively to maintain the school's very proud tradition in competitive sports and increase pupils' participation in physical education. It is contributing well to pupils' development of physical skills and well-being. The money spent from the sport funding on extra staff is having a positive impact. For example, some outstanding teaching, delivered by a member of the learning support staff, was observed in a physical education session.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding mostly benefit well from the support they receive. Much of this work comes in the shape of specific programmes, such as projects to improve reading, or speech and language.
- The management of the programme to help the large number of pupils who find learning difficult is largely in the hands of a skilful and effective learning support assistant. She ensures that all legal duties are properly fulfilled. Help for individuals and groups of pupils is proving to be increasingly effective and the majority of pupils are progressing well.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all current legal requirements.
- The parents spoken to during the inspection believe that they are well-informed about the school's work and about their own children's progress.

- Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There are good links with parents, which include workshops, home visits and open days. Newsletters are sent home that provide parents with information about what their child is learning. Early Years staff know what their responsibilities are, and responsibilities for children's personal development are shared successfully. Transition from Early Years into Year 1 is smooth.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The members of the governing body possess a wide range of skills which benefit the school, such as financial and management skills.
  - Governors have received training to help them improve their work. In recent times, the local authority, HMI, and educational consultants have provided support and advice and it is clear that this is paying off. Interviews and documentation show that there are clear improvements in the way that the governing body checks on pupils' achievement, the use of pupil premium, and safety matters. Minutes of meetings show that senior staff are questioned on the reports that they produce for governors. However, all this is all fairly recent and it is too early say that these routines are well established or to fully judge their effectiveness
  - Governors visit classrooms to check on pupils' progress. They have spent money on new staff to improve teaching and learning and inspection evidence shows that this is helping the school to improve.

## 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>	119516
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	442391

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	251
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Wright
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elaine Grimshaw
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2013
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