

# St John the Evangelist RC Primary School

Darwen Road, Bromley Cross, Bolton, Lancashire, BL7 9HT

**Inspection dates** 14–15 October 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Good leadership accounts for the school's good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Effective management of teaching and learning by school leaders and governors has had a strong impact on pupils' progress and attainment.
- Governance is a particular strength of the school's leadership and has been central to its success.
- Pupils' behaviour and their safety are managed well. Attendance is above average and pupils are keen to learn. They feel safe in school and contribute very well to the school's welcoming and caring ethos.
- The quality of teaching has improved. It is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers value the contributions that pupils make to lessons and cater well for their varying learning and personal needs.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Progress in the Early Years and Key Stage 1 has been impressive since the previous inspection, and it is quickly gathering pace in Years 3 to 6.
- Children are given a good start in the Early Years (Reception class).
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, particularly the way that the school cares for pupils who are potentially the most vulnerable.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not always reach the standards in mathematics that they should, especially the most-able pupils.
- Teachers' marking of mathematics is not challenging enough and does not give pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve.
- Frequent spelling errors lessen the overall quality of pupils' writing.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons and part-lessons. Three of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, pupils, parents, a representative from the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Also taken into account were 49 responses from parents via Ofsted’s online survey (Parent View), as well as questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a wide range of documentation that included: national assessment data and the school’s own assessments of pupils’ progress; the school’s own view of its work; minutes of governing body meetings; local authority reports; curriculum information and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Frances Farnorth

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school in which the vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is below the average for primary schools nationally.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A broadly average proportion of disadvantaged pupils is supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- There is full-time Early Years (Reception class) provision.
- Before- and after-school care is available on site in the morning and off site in the evening through an external provider. This provision is not managed by the governing body. A separate report on the provision is published on the Ofsted website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.
- There have been a significant number of changes among teaching staff since the previous inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has been awarded the Eco-Schools Silver award and has renewed its Healthy School status.

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

- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly for the most-able pupils by:
  - \_ ensuring that teachers' marking of mathematics is rigorous and challenging and always provides clear guidance for pupils about how to move on to the next steps
  - \_ providing more opportunities for pupils to use mathematics skills in different ways and in different subjects to solve life-related problems.
- Improve standards in pupils' spelling throughout the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- Good leadership at all levels is successfully driving the school forward. A strong ethos of mutual support and ambition for the school has moulded staff and governors into a cohesive team whose collective aim is to see pupils' achievement and their personal development thrive.
- Senior leaders work effectively with the headteacher to provide strong role models of good practice and relationships in the school. Weekly senior team meetings ensure that issues and challenges are dealt with promptly. They share a rigorous programme of checking the school's work and have a very accurate view of its strengths and what needs to be improved.
- The school has worked productively with the local authority. Appropriate support and advice for teaching and leadership has been fully embraced. As a result, the local authority, while maintaining an overview of the school's effectiveness, recognises leaders' ability to manage its own improvements well.
- Central to the school's improvement has been the very robust management of teaching and learning. Ineffective teaching has been challenged by leaders, and eliminated. Astute appointments to the teaching staff, high-quality training in subject knowledge and leadership skills, and honest feedback on their work have established a strong teaching team who understand how they are all accountable for the school's continued improvement.
- Middle leaders, responsible for individual subjects, have worked well to plan for the recent changes to the primary school curriculum. They are clear about whole-school issues that need to be addressed and take every opportunity to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness to prepare them for their future life in modern Britain. New topics have been introduced to add more meaning and enjoyment for pupils in the way that they learn. Leaders are aware of the need to focus on new ways for pupils to practise and improve mathematics skills across different subjects.
- Management of the primary sport funding is effective. Opportunities for pupils to take part in sports have increased and pupils enjoy the competitive games with other schools. Specialist sports providers and teachers from a local high school enhance the quality of physical education lessons and simultaneously provide valuable training for school staff.
- The thriving eco-club whose members tend the school garden, including chickens and a rabbit, makes a good contribution to pupils' learning about well-being and healthy life styles.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance is a significant strength of school leadership. Governors' clear direction has guided the school through a difficult period over time and set it securely on a successful path. The wealth of expertise among governors, and their extensive training, leave them very well placed to challenge the school over all aspects of its work. Governors analyse the school's academic performance closely to see how it compares with the national picture. Particular attention is given to the progress of disadvantaged pupils to make sure pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide equality of opportunity for all pupils. Governors are also aware of the impact that sport funding has on pupils' well-being and physical development. Governors have been instrumental in helping to improve teaching quality over time. They are clear about the current quality of teaching and how teachers' salaries are linked to performance management outcomes. Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements. Finances are managed very efficiently. Governors have commendably helped to improve the school, while at the same time managing to reduce significantly a large budget deficit.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school and use words such as 'fun', 'hard-working' and 'fantastic', when they describe it. They enjoy their lessons and share very trusting relationships with teachers and other adults who work in the school.
- They behave well in lessons and are keen to get on with their work. Pupils say that occasionally behaviour in lessons is not as good as it could be. Inspectors also witnessed a small amount of inattentiveness at times. Nevertheless, pupils give themselves eight out of 10 for behaviour and inspectors judge it to be good.
- Pupils behave well around the school. Their manners at the dining table are a credit to them. Relationships in the play ground, which they keep very tidy, are good and they move sensibly and safely

around the school.

- Politeness and courtesy towards others are hallmarks of their good personal development and reflect the school's very strong Christian values. Pupils give generously to charities, both locally and those that provide overseas aid. They are very mindful of others' cultural lifestyles and their different needs because of valuable e-mail exchanges with schools abroad.
- Pupils also contribute well to the everyday life and friendly ethos of the school. They present themselves well in their school uniform and attend school regularly and on time. The school council gives them the chance to voice their opinion and bring about improvements such as better equipment in the playground and a 'friendship stop,' to make sure that no one is left out of a game.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel safe in school and say that they are very well cared for by grown-ups.
- They state firmly that bullying is non-existent in school and that name-calling of any kind is extremely rare.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take. They learn about the possible dangers linked to use of the Internet, and how to deal with them, and know what precautions to take in order to avoid risk outside of school.
- Parents are entirely confident about the care that the school provides and fully endorse their children's views.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Successful management of teaching has brought good improvement. Staff have responded well to the training and support provided. The skills they have developed bring consistently good teaching throughout the school and sometimes better teaching in the Early Years and in Key Stage 1.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils' learning. They are equally sensitive to pupils' particular needs. They work in harmony with teachers and show good skills and initiative in moving pupils' learning on at the right moment by questioning them and helping them to correct mistakes.
- Pupils' varying learning needs are taken into account when work is planned and there is generally good challenge. Lessons begin promptly and helpful resources are always ready. Occasionally, time in mathematics lessons is not used as well as it could be to allow the most-able pupils to challenge themselves to the full and make their best progress.
- Technology is used well as a tool to help pupils learn. Electronic whiteboards feature well in all lessons to support learning and pupils have good access to computers.
- A good variety of methods is used to generate interest and enthusiasm for learning. For example, pupils like to test their ideas on one another to find the best answers to questions. In Year 6, their imagination was fired up really well as they got to grips with scenes from Macbeth in their drama lesson. Year 3 pupils were bubbling with excitement as they dressed up as ancient Egyptians and re-enacted the roles of Egyptian soldiers or a high priest preparing a body for mummification.
- There is a good emphasis on developing literacy skills. Reading is taught well and displays about authors and their books attract pupils' attention and give it a high profile in the school. There is a good range of writing in the school and standards have improved well, but pupils' spelling is still a weakness because recent measures to improve spelling have not yet taken effect.
- Pupils learn numeracy skills well and develop a good understanding of numbers and how they work. They solve number problems, using decimals or fractions, for example, confidently and develop appropriate mathematical vocabulary. They do not, however, have enough opportunities to use those skills in different ways, for example, to investigate and solve problems linked to other subjects.
- Assessment is effective and timely in measuring pupils' progress and helping them to keep them on track to achieve learning goals. Marking quality, however, is inconsistent. It is good in writing and well focused on improvement. The same cannot be said of mathematics, however, where marking does not always challenge pupils and comments about next steps, particularly for the most-able pupils, are sparse.

## The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils are well prepared for their transfer from the Reception class to Year 1 and build well on their earlier good levels of development. They make good progress and currently achieve above average levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. The proportions of pupils reaching Level 3 in those

subjects has improved significantly because of the consistently stronger and more effective teaching in Years 1 and 2.

- New appointments to the teaching staff have strengthened teaching in Years 3 to 6 and brought more consistent quality. As a result, progress, year on year, is gathering pace quickly. Robust assessments and samples of pupils' work show that pupils overall are meeting challenging targets and many
- are exceeding expected rates of progress. The current Year 5 group has made good progress from lower than typical starting points at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Standards attained at the end of Year 6 in the 2014 national tests were broadly average and did not match the good performance of the previous year. Previously ineffective teaching hindered progress for that year group as they moved through the school. Nevertheless, they made up good ground in Year 6 and did well in reading and writing, with good proportions reaching the higher Levels 5 and 6 in writing.
- There was less success in mathematics, however, and the school acknowledges that higher standards in mathematics are now a priority.
- Assessment for pupils now in Year 6 and the rate of progress seen in their work in Year 5 and currently, indicate that pupils are well placed to reach higher standards and achieve well in all subjects by the end of the year.
- Pupils achieve well in reading. In Year 2 they use their good phonics (letters and the sounds they make) skills to sound out difficult words and make sense of what they read. They enjoy talking about the books that they read, and their favourite authors. Pupils read regularly at home and in school and generally approach their reading confidently. By the end of Year 6, pupils select from a wide range of reading. They read fluently, use good expression and are confident when reading aloud in class or to an assembly. Pupils often use the public library to extend the range of their reading.
- The most-able pupils are being increasingly challenged. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014 rose considerably. At Key Stage 2, there was a good performance from the most-able pupils in writing. The school is currently targeting mathematics by providing additional booster classes to take more pupils to the highest possible levels in the subject.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Achievement is at least in line with similar groups nationally and frequently better. The school has revised the way that pupils' learning is planned and this has a good impact. Parents are welcomed into school to share in the process of their child's learning. Good use is made of outside agencies to ensure that the best provision is made available.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding perform well and any gaps between their achievement and non-disadvantaged pupils in the school have closed rapidly. Assessment data indicate that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals perform better than the non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, and at least as well as others in the school in reading, writing and spelling, punctuation and grammar. They did not achieve as well as others in mathematics and this is now being addressed as part of the school's determination to secure equality of opportunity.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children enter the Reception class with broadly typical skills for their age. Their progress through the Reception Year is good and the large majority achieves good levels of development. This shows improvement over time. Mobility issues through the year, however, meant that fewer pupils exceeded the expected levels of development.
- Provision has improved since the previous inspection because of the extensive training and sharing of good practice that has taken place. Assessment systems have improved and this, in turn, has improved the way in which children's needs are catered for. There is a good range of activities across all areas of learning both, adult-led or chosen by children, to match and challenge their skills. Teaching is good overall and there is outstanding teaching of phonics to give children the skills they need to tackle reading and writing confidently.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years are good. The Early Years leader is knowledgeable about how children learn best and ensures that high expectations are met. Children's good behaviour is encouraged and managed well and their well-being and safety are given high priority. Very strong links with parents are firmly established. Valuable information about children's achievements at home and school is shared regularly and this helps the Early Years staff when planning the next things for children to learn.

## 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>	105249
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	442335

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>	198
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alyson Grundy
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Carroll
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 November 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 333440
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