

St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Newchurch

St Peter's Road, Newchurch, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 9EZ

Inspection dates 19–20 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- This is an outstanding school. The exceptional vision of the headteacher inspires all to provide the very best for the pupils.
- Improvements have been made that have upgraded the building, inside and outside, as well as enhancing the education of the pupils.
- Systems to monitor teaching and pupils' progress are rigorous and both the quality of teaching and achievement have risen since the previous inspection.
- Governors and staff all play a role in leading the school. The leaders of English and mathematics are strong in bringing about changes in these subjects. Other middle leaders are developing their roles and are not yet fully effective.
- Pupils show their enjoyment of school by their above average attendance and exemplary behaviour. They try to share their happiness with others and raise considerable funds for charity.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and are confident that staff see their welfare as a priority. They feel valued and in return show great respect for one another. Visitors are welcomed in a charming and friendly manner.
- Teaching is outstanding because of the teachers' enthusiasm and determination to make learning interesting. Support staff play a crucial role in helping pupils, especially in the very effective teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds).
- The curriculum is planned with great care to capture pupils' interests. The amazing outdoor areas are fully exploited for adventures, as well as story reading.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As a result, the pupils are inspiring in their actions and thoughts about respect for others and their own role in society. They value one another as individuals and it is a privilege to see how the older pupils help the younger ones.
- Achievement overall is excellent. Attainment is well above average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The most able make similar progress overall to that of other pupils, but very occasionally their work is not hard enough to enable them always to make the best progress.
- In the early years, children benefit from a rich curriculum and very effective teaching. They settle quickly, make rapid progress and are a delight to visit.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes and in small groups.
- Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised, with a focus on writing, mathematics and the early years.
- Pupils read to the inspector.
- Many documents were reviewed, including the school's improvement plan, subject action plans, the data on pupils' progress, the minutes of meetings held by the governing body and information about safeguarding.
- The inspector took account of the 62 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also spoke to parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Seventeen responses to the staff questionnaire were analysed.

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average and hardly any pupils are identified as not having English as their first language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Check that work set for the most able is always hard enough to ensure that they always make rapid progress.
- Develop the skills of subject leaders, other than in English and mathematics, so that their action plans focus more on improving attainment.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership and vision. Staff and governors are unanimous in their respect and support for her. Since taking up the role of headteacher, no time has been wasted in bringing about improvements, but at a pace that ensures that staff champion changes because they recognise the reasons behind them. The school is very well placed to continue to move forward.
- The school's evaluation of its performance is both reflective and challenging. This is a staff that does not understand complacency. The strive to improve is clear in the consistent response to any adjustments. For example, the new approach to marking pupils' work has been fully embraced and ensures that pupils know how to make their work better.
- New systems to check on progress have been put in place and provide robust details on pupils' achievement. Data are reviewed and interventions put in place if it is noted a pupil is not making enough progress. More attention is being given to the needs of the most able pupils, with an increasing number being entered for the high Level 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school promotes equal opportunities for all pupils most effectively.
- Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching. Books are reviewed as well as lessons observed. The results of this process help in making decisions about training and supporting individuals. Staff rise to meet the high expectations set for them, including those new to the profession.
- Staff are set targets based on pupils' progress and attend regular meetings with the headteacher to review progress and provide reasons for any potential dips. The school's system to check on teachers' performance is closely linked to achievement of their targets and this informs increases in salary.
- Information from tracking procedures identifies priorities which are closely linked to raising attainment. These are included in the school's effective improvement plan, which identifies precise actions that enable success to be measured easily. The action plans for literacy and numeracy are similarly detailed, because the leadership of English and mathematics is effective. Other middle leaders are not yet fully effective, as their monitoring roles are not yet fully developed and so priorities in other subjects are not closely linked to raising attainment.
- The curriculum is rich and stimulating. The same topic is followed by the whole school so that pupils in the mixed-aged classes do not repeat activities and resources can be shared. A most effective balance has been maintained between academic, creative, social and physical development. New systems to teach mathematics and writing provide more structure to teaching skills, so that what is taught in one year is built on in the next.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong and is evident in all aspects of the school day. The imaginative use of the outdoor wooded area encourages a love of the outdoors, as well as developing inquisitive minds that want to learn more. The school's acts of worship are a joy to attend. Singing is harmonious and sets the scene for worship. Pupils value their own faith, but also learn about other cultures. The school prepares its pupils very well for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school sports funding is used most effectively. Better use is made of the school grounds to extend orienteering skills. Training has increased for staff and closer links made with other community sports providers, so that the variety of activities available is wider. Evaluation shows improved participation in sport and membership of clubs. The school has attained a national award for the provision of sport.
- The local authority offers a 'light-touch' support for this excellent school. Nevertheless, visits are regular and include the monitoring of teaching and analysis of data. Training is provided, including for governors and teachers new to the profession.
- The school checks that safeguarding meets requirements. The caring ethos extends to everyone and reflects the strong Christian teachings that are woven into much of the day-to-day events of the school.
- The headteacher gains the confidence of parents from initial contact. They are kept fully aware of everything that is happening, as well as their children's progress. Parents have every confidence in the school and willingly recommend it to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body includes a wide range of expertise and governors contribute very well to the management of the school. Links to classes and subjects have extended governors' visits, observations of teaching and reviews of pupils' books. As a result, governors are fully aware of the quality of teaching, including how teachers who meet their performance targets successfully receive salary rewards. Data on pupils' achievement are analysed in detail and questions raised when any concerns are identified. Consequently, governors have a clear understanding of the reasons behind the dip in

2014 and why current attainment is back to its previous high level. The school has a healthy budget based on effective financial management, which includes the effective spending of any additional funding. Governors and leaders are aware that the spending of the pupil premium is beneficial both to eligible pupils' social needs as well as their academic progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This is a truly happy school and the warm welcome envelops pupils, staff and visitors, so that all quickly feel a part of the community. Behaviour is exemplary. At play pupils are energetic and make very effective use of the resources. They organise games without falling out and are competitive, but not aggressive. Their enthusiasm to talk to visitors is one of the many pleasures of the school and it is made clear to visitors how proud pupils are of their school.
- In lessons, pupils work hard and enjoy discussing their ideas with a partner. On the odd occasion interest wanes, especially if the task is a little too easy. Despite this, pupils' books show an amazing amount of work completed and many have already finished one book in the first half term.
- The pupils are eager to help one another and visitors. They are polite and considerate and go out of their way to be helpful. The school is a hive of industry, with pupils making the most of all that is on offer. The older pupils take on many roles in school with great enthusiasm. They embrace the idea of accepting responsibility as members of the chaplaincy team and the school council, for example. Pupils instigate their own charity work, as in raising funds for Darian House Children's Hospice, and this inspires others to do the same.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The quality of relationships in school is excellent and wonderful to see. They underpin the supportive atmosphere that enables pupils to feel safe and secure. This has a very positive impact on the more vulnerable pupils and some who are newcomers to the school. They settle well and make excellent progress in extending their self-esteem and achievements.
- During the inspection it was anti-bullying week and pupils' understanding of how their actions can hurt others is very well developed. Pupils have a good knowledge of the different types of bullying and a resounding 'no' was the reply to 'Does bullying happen in your school?' They simply do not agree with it and this includes calling others names or making homophobic or racist comments.
- Not only do pupils feel safe, but they take it upon themselves to ensure the safety of others. This includes following school rules which they have been involved in writing, as well as attending sessions to learn about emergency resuscitation.
- Pupils are well informed about keeping themselves healthy. They recall important messages from visiting specialists about the dangers of alcohol and smoking, as well as how to avoid putting themselves in danger, including when using the Internet.
- The school council provided a quotation to sum up their views of the school. 'Teachers are amazing and lessons are fun and we are helped if we are struggling. Visitors extend our skills especially in physical education. We are taught good manners and are one big happy family.'

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching is consistently at least good and includes many excellent features. Overall, it is outstanding and has a significant impact on the learning of all pupils.
- The principal strength lies in the ethos created in lessons, so whether pupils are busy with practical activities or working with a partner researching quietly, all are learning most effectively. Classrooms are inspiring places for pupils to learn. Their successes are displayed alongside useful prompts to aid numeracy and literacy skills.
- Teachers place great value on pupils' opinions, and questions encourage pupils to think effectively and then express their ideas clearly. They have many opportunities to discuss their ideas with a partner and this enables them to learn from one another.
- Assessment is used very successfully to check on pupils' progress and provide additional help when it is most needed. This is most advantageous for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs. Guidance and extra resources enable them to learn effectively alongside their peers. On the other

hand, the tasks for the most able are occasionally not hard enough. At times these pupils spend too long repeating work or completing worksheets, rather than moving straight to work that is more challenging.

- Management of pupils is extremely effective because it is based on humour and mutual respect. Pupils enjoy learning and rarely need reminding of the importance of good behaviour. Learning inspires pupils because of the variety of activities. Pupils enjoy making up their own games in physical education just as much as they do when trying to mummify a pupil as part of their topic on Ancient Egypt.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught very well because staff are confident in their own knowledge. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their ideas and methods of calculations so that errors can be clarified and pupils learn from one another. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to practise these skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers ensure that pupils are clear about their individual improvement targets. A label in their books acts as a constant reminder of what they are aiming to improve. Marking is effective and provides pupils with good quality feedback on how to make work better. Extra practice is provided if needed.
- Homework links closely to the current topic. Pupils value the grid they are given for a term's work which includes a variety of tasks, such as making a cake decoration or doing research.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Progress and attainment based on national tests vary because the small size of each year group means that one pupil can represent a high percentage of the total. This led to an apparent dip in attainment in 2014 at the end of Key Stage 2, but this can be explained by the number of pupils starting school in Key Stage 2 even as late as in Year 6. These pupils had not experienced the same quality of education as others in school and there was insufficient time to fully close the gaps in their skills. Despite this, an analysis of data shows many pupils make more than the expected progress from their individual starting points. This pattern of strong progress is evident in all years in school and leads to outstanding achievement overall.
- Children leave the early years well prepared for learning and these skills are extended in Key Stage 1. The results of national assessments at the end of Year 2 have been impressive over recent years. Pupils reach standards that are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's monitoring data and a review of pupils' books show that these standards are being sustained. The proportion reaching the higher Level 3 is increasing year on year.
- Progress continues to be rapid in Key Stage 2 and other than the explained dip in 2014, attainment has risen year on year and was high in 2013. Current evidence shows standards are due to rise to well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The focus on extending challenge is reaping benefits and the school's predictions indicate that some pupils will reach the very high Level 6 this year.
- Reading is strong throughout the school. Phonics (letters and their sounds) are taught most effectively in the early years and Key Stage 1. Teachers and teaching assistants lead small groups with tasks matched closely to their ability. The results of the national screening check in Year 1 were well above average. Older pupils are fluent readers and use their skills for research, as well as pleasure.
- Pupils' books show that pupils in Year 6 write very imaginatively. They structure their work well, using paragraphs and interesting phrases that grab the readers' attention, such as 'and so it began'.
- The school has adopted a consistent approach to teaching problem-solving and pupils in Year 6 apply this well to spot the key facts and identify the calculation needed. They have a good bank of knowledge which they apply well to reach the correct answers.
- The most-able pupils make similar progress to that of others overall and the proportion reaching higher levels is increasing. However, very occasionally tasks lack enough challenge to enable these pupils to make the best progress. Sometimes worksheets are used that are not hard enough or pupils have to complete easier work, before getting down to work that stretches their learning.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is too small in different years for an analysis of the national test results comparing their performance with those of other pupils at the end of Year 6 to be meaningful. An analysis of progress in each year shows that the pupils make outstanding progress similar to that of other pupils in school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational make good progress overall. Some make excellent progress in their social skills so that they are in a better frame of mind to learn and make progress. Data show that this prepares pupils well for their next stage of education. Management of special educational needs by the deputy headteacher is most effective in ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of these pupils.
- High attainment is evident in other subjects. Music is enjoyed and the walls are full of amazing art, often

done with the guidance of experts. The shiny array of sports trophies show pupils' prowess in sport. Pupils are also skilled in using information and communication technology (ICT). Year 6 pupils were observed confidently selecting information for research and in other years gathering facts for their PowerPoint presentations.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Attainment as children start school varies from year to year, but currently is typical for the children's age, although often lower in writing skills. The very imaginative curriculum and focus on widening children's horizons enable them to make rapid progress, especially in their creative skills and wider understanding of the world. They make good progress in writing and this is rising as children are given more opportunities to practise their skills. Overall, children are prepared very well for starting in Year 1.
- Children behave very well and follow the carefully established routines. They enjoy learning and clearly feel safe, even when they go exploring in the woods.
- Teaching is excellent because staff have a very clear understanding of how these young children learn. Sessions are exciting and include many imaginative choices. At the time of the inspection, the children were acting out the Nativity including donning costumes for the animals. They were trying out pomegranates, goats' cheese and dates as food that would have been eaten when Jesus was born. Writing is not neglected as children collect facts and discuss the story.
- Assessment takes place while children are learning and the notes recorded lead to future tasks matching the children's individual needs. Children identified as having special educational needs have additional help. This was very effective, for example, when the teaching assistant used large shapes for matching and made learning interesting.
- Management is very effective in identifying precisely which aspect needs to improve, hence the focus on writing. The outdoor space has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now used successfully for growing plants, collecting bugs as well as extending other skills in the outdoors. Visits and visitors broaden pupils' experiences, such as the visits to the seaside and the Wild Boar Park.

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	119664
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	448510

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	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Goy
Headteacher	Helen Sullivan
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2010
Telephone number	01706 229972
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	bursar@st-petersrc.lancs.sch.uk

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