

St Mary Magdalene's Roman Catholic Primary School

Wellfield Drive, Burnley, Lancashire, BB12 0JD

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| 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.

- Pupils thrive because they are well looked after and valued as individuals. The determined headteacher, senior leaders and governors are aspirational in their drive to raise standards and the quality of teaching.
- Pupils behave well. They are extremely well mannered, welcoming and joyful. They are a credit to their school and their families.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children in the Reception class make good progress because they are taught well.
- Standards are continuing to rise and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils receive a well-rounded education. They achieve good results in reading, writing and mathematics and are passionate about music, sport and art. Pupils enjoy their learning.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and they are proud of it. Their work is carefully presented.
- Good support is provided for each pupil, particularly those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Parents and their children are very clear about the school's strengths. Their children enjoy coming to school and completing homework with the support of their parents.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In the 2014 statutory tests at the end of Year 6, not enough pupils made more than expected progress in writing. Progress in writing through the school is slower than in reading and mathematics.
- On occasions, work is not matched to the different abilities of pupils.
- Some teachers do not check that pupils have responded to their advice for improvement in marking.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons across the school, some accompanied by the headteacher. They looked at pupils' books, talked to pupils about their work and assessed their progress over time. Inspectors listened to some pupils reading from Key Stages 1 and 2, observed lunchtime and break time arrangements, and talked with groups of pupils.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and two members of the governing body. A meeting was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the 27 responses to the online survey, Parent View, as well as the school's surveys of parents' views. The 19 completed staff questionnaires were also taken into account.
- Inspectors looked at the school's work and a range of documents. These included the school's view of its effectiveness, school improvement planning, and records of pupils' achievement, behaviour, attendance and systems for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sharon Bruton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St. Mary Magdalene's is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. This funding is for pupils in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have 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 reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards across the school in writing and increase the proportion of pupils who make more than expected progress by:
 - consistently building on pupils' skills, particularly in writing, to improve their work in English
 - making sure that teachers set work to match the different abilities of pupils in their classes
 - checking that pupils act on teachers' guidance about how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The effective headteacher and governors work productively to provide a good education for pupils. Standards have risen year-on-year, and teachers are well supported and challenged to provide good quality teaching. Leaders have acted successfully on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection.
- Both socially and academically, pupils reaching the end of Year 6 are ready to move on to the next stage in their education. The broad curriculum has, at its heart, the commitment to pupils' enjoyment of learning across subjects. They are taught about British values of democracy and put this into practice. Consequently, they are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are keen to take part in elections for house representatives, are enthusiastic debaters and committed buddies as they help look after each other. Pupils take to heart the school's motto to 'Love one another'.
- Pupils' progress is carefully checked by senior leaders, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and in writing. This has been successful in raising standards at the end of Year 6 and in significantly reducing the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils throughout the school. However, this is not consistent across the school for all pupils because, in some classes, pupils are not challenged or supported enough to achieve their full potential.
- Performance management arrangements are very specific and underperformance is robustly addressed. The headteacher and governors set specific targets for teachers based on how well their teaching helps pupils to make good progress. Very focused training on improving standards in writing, for example, has helped to raise standards in English.
- Strong leadership spurs on the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Middle leaders have improved their leadership of subject areas. As a result, standards have risen at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. The wide curriculum has also contributed to rising standards in other subjects such as physical education, history, music and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Pupil premium funding is used well to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Governors are firmly committed to using this funding to make a difference. It is used to improve the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of support staff.
- Primary physical education and sport funding is used particularly well to improve pupils' physical education as well as their knowledge of how to live healthily. A specialist sports coach provides knowledgeable and effective teaching. Pupils are keen sporting enthusiasts in school and take part in many activities and competitions after school.
- Pupils learn about their own and other faiths, and about people from different backgrounds. This helps to foster good relationships in the local and wider community. Visits from members of other faiths and studies of different cultures are provided to celebrate our rich, diverse society, preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils are taught that tolerance and respect are the mainstay of different faiths. Leaders foster good relationships and pupils are not discriminated against. In return, they do not discriminate between different individuals or groups of people.
- The rich, new curriculum is clearly planned to raise standards in the core skills of literacy and numeracy. It also includes a broad range of other skills to enrich pupils' learning. Despite some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, pupils have equal opportunity to achieve well.
- Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Their spiritual development is promoted exceptionally well. Pupils think very carefully about the effects of their actions on others and talk about a 'philosophical approach to life'.
- The local authority has supported school improvement well over a number of years. It has clearly identified areas for improvement and provided regular challenge and support.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Systems to keep pupils safe are carefully thought out and regularly checked. Training to safeguard pupils is regular and thorough.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective. Its contribution is based on an enthusiastic goal to improve pupils' standards and prepare them well for the future. The use of pupil premium funding is thoughtfully and effectively planned to raise standards for disadvantaged pupils.
 - Teachers' progression through pay levels is based on improving pupils' progress through good quality teaching. Governors see this at first hand through visiting classes and looking at pupils' work. Their knowledge and understanding of pupils' achievement is supported by rigorous training on reviewing school data on pupils' progress. Governors are passionate and effective in providing a curriculum that

develops pupils' academic and personal development well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy school life and learning because each one of them is valued and because they are taught well.
- Pupils are a delight to speak with. They are first and foremost concerned about how others are feeling. They make a point about greeting visitors by name and thanked inspectors, for instance, for visiting their school.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is exemplary. Pupils conduct themselves with care and thought for others. Adults are greeted with enthusiasm and, invariably, are engaged in conversation. Pupils think about the consequences of their behaviour on others as a matter of course.
- Attitudes to learning are positive. Lessons are rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. Occasionally, learning slows in lessons where work is not matched closely enough to pupils' individual abilities.
- Pupils appreciate opportunities to take on positions of responsibility. They take this seriously and carefully seek out pupils' views on their school. These are carefully presented to school leaders who listen attentively to their findings. As a result, ICT resources have been increased.
- Parents believe that behaviour is good and that their child is looked after well. They are key partners in their child's education, contributing to their above-average attendance and helping them in their learning at home. Pupils are extremely well turned out in their striking uniforms.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are taught how to manage their own behaviour and to think of its effect on others.
- Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet. They know who to turn to if they have any worries or concerns.
- Pupils and parents believe that they are kept safe at school.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about different types of bullying and keen to say that it is 'the wrong thing to do'. They reflect thoughtfully on how this fits in with thinking about the welfare of others.
- Staff supervise with care the good playground behaviour.

The quality of teaching is good

- Many pupils describe their lessons as one of the best things about their school. They are pleased because they gain knowledge, are encouraged to think about their learning, and enjoy the interesting lessons. Much is expected from them and pupils rise to the high expectations of their teachers.
- Pupils benefit from good teaching and use their learning to help reach higher levels across many subjects. They move between research on the internet to writing lengthy essays with apparent ease, for example. This is because of their teachers' commitment to promoting pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- The teaching in mathematics is a strength of the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They build successfully on pupils' emerging skills by guiding them to use basic skills to tackle mathematical problems at the higher levels.
- Pupils learn well in reading because of good teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) and reading comprehension. Pupils benefit from teachers who are enthusiastic readers. Books are wide in range and of good quality. Fiction and non-fiction books appeal to the interests of girls and boys who become confident and enthusiastic readers.
- Some features of teaching are outstanding, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are often enthralled by their work after being stimulated by knowledgeable and skilful teaching. Pupils' learning and progress slow when teaching does not sufficiently match the abilities of individual pupils. At these times, some pupils are not challenged enough to produce higher level work and sometimes work is not explained clearly enough.
- Writing standards are improving because writing has been a school priority. Sharply focused support and training have promoted improved teaching. Standards are now significantly above average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Occasionally, however, skills in writing are not built upon in a consistent manner.

- Support assistants are skilled and knowledgeable. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and their standards are rising. Pupils learn to be more self-reliant and confident in their abilities. At the same time, they are sensitively supported to learn skills to improve their reading, writing and mathematics.
- Marking of pupils' work is regular and helpful. Most pupils act diligently on advice for improvement suggested by their teacher. Support staff and teachers use this information well to plan future lessons. Any misunderstandings are cleared up and more challenging work is provided, where necessary. On the occasions when teachers do not check that pupils have acted on their advice, pupils' progress slows.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards are improving year-on-year. Up to 2014, improved standards were especially noticeable in Key Stage 1. Records of pupils' progress and their work in books show that standards by the end of Year 6 are also rising further and that progress is good in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils now join Year 1 with skills that are above those typical for their age. Pupils currently in Year 6 joined Year 1 with skills that were broadly in line with those typical for their age. In 2014, results in the Year 1 national screening check on phonics were above average and an improvement on previous results. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above average at the end of Year 2 and an improvement on previous years. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was above average. Pupils' attainment in English grammar, punctuation and spelling was significantly above average. Attainment at the higher levels in mathematics was significantly above average. Pupils made more than expected progress in reading and mathematics and broadly expected progress in writing.
- Work in pupils' books and the school's records demonstrate improved progress, especially in writing, and higher standards at significantly above national figures for reading, writing and mathematics for pupils currently in Year 6. Although pupils in Year 6 are making good progress in writing, in some classes pupils' progress in writing is too slow.
- Pupils relish lessons in art, physical education, music and history. They learn well in these subjects. Pupils learn about the world and society. They are proud to show their work on the Mayan civilisation or the Great War, as well as their musical knowledge. Pupils are enthusiastic and accomplished members of the choir as well as skilled players of musical instruments.
- Disadvantaged pupils performed as well as other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 in 2014. At the end of Year 6, they were a term behind their peers in reading and mathematics and two terms behind other pupils in writing. When compared with other pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were in line in reading, a term behind in mathematics and two terms behind in writing. Their progress matched other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics but was not as good as other pupils nationally in writing.
- Currently, pupils' work and the school's tracking of progress show that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and that gaps in their attainment have narrowed significantly. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most-able pupils are making good progress. A much larger than average proportion is attaining higher level work in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The early years provision is good

- Children settle down quickly in the early years because they are welcomed so positively and are prepared well for school life. They make good progress from their individual starting points that are broadly typical for their age. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception has risen in recent years and is above average.
- Good teaching, together with careful and effective support for children's personal and social development, prepare them well for joining Year 1.
- Interesting activities capture children's curiosity for learning. Skills in early reading, writing and mathematics are developed in these activities. Phonics sessions teach children to link the sounds that letters make. Children are very enthusiastic when sounding out letters to make words. They search out books to practise linking sounds and thoroughly enjoy beginning to read. Number work is taught by skilled and knowledgeable early years staff. It is then practised during many activities such as shopping, taking away numbers and counting on.

- Indoor activities are particularly varied and interesting. Children enjoy using their early reading, writing and number skills outdoors, although activities are comparatively less engaging. Children are not as confident if they are not discreetly guided when they are not in adult led session. Right from the start, children are confident about how much they are valued and respected. This extends to respecting others and so children have a keen sense of fairness and of the difference between right and wrong. They are willing to share and take turns, and know why this is important. Consequently, their behaviour is good.
- Procedures are in place to keep children safe. The indoor and outdoor spaces are regularly checked for safety by staff and governors. Children are willing to take acceptable risks, while climbing for example, because they are encouraged to be confident and to explore their capabilities.
- Good leadership results in a united team who work closely together to teach and care for children. Knowledgeable staff monitor children's progress regularly and share this information in order to provide further challenge and guidance for children.

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

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| Unique reference number | 119489 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 461762 |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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| 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 | 209 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Michael Haworth |
| Headteacher | Julie Frazer |
| Date of previous school inspection | 26 September 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01282 436880 |
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