

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Windrows, New Church Farm, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 8NP

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

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 make good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school from their different starting points.
- Children get a good start to their learning in the early years provision and are increasingly well prepared to enter Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is good across the school. Staff set work that motivates and engages pupils in their learning and enables them to make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs are well supported. Any gaps in their attainment and progress compared with other pupils are closing.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, behave well and are keen to learn. Pupils get on very well together and say they feel very safe and well cared for in school.
- School leaders and governors have a clear view of how well the school is performing and where it can do better. They are working well together to improve the quality of teaching and this is raising pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Parents are very appreciative and supportive of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. Pupils, including the most able, are not always given work that is hard enough to enable them to make the best possible progress and reach the highest standards.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length across the curriculum.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems, both in mathematics and in other subjects.
- Staff do not always check that pupils respond to comments and advice given in marking.
- Staff do not have enough opportunities to observe outstanding teaching in order to improve their own practice.
- School leaders, including governors, do not analyse and use data as effectively as they might to compare the performance of different groups of pupils and evaluate the impact of the school's actions to raise standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning on 10 occasions. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and with five governors, including the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. The inspector also met a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector met a group of pupils and also spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. He listened to pupils read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents concerning pupils' current achievement and progress, development plans and information about teachers' performance. He also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. The minutes of governing body meetings were also considered.
- The inspector considered 12 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and also spoke informally to several parents. He also considered 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in five classes from the Nursery to Year 6, including some mixed-aged classes. The early years provision includes a part-time morning and afternoon Nursery class and a full-time Reception class.
- A very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is over twice the national average. These are pupils supported by the pupil premium. This is funding the school receives for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The headteacher took up his post in September 2013.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching further in order to raise pupils' achievement so that more pupils, including the most able, make the best possible progress by making sure that:
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high enough
 - the work set is always hard enough so pupils, including the most able, are consistently challenged to make the best possible progress and achieve the highest standards
 - pupils have more opportunities to write at length across the curriculum
 - pupils have more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems in mathematics lessons and in other subjects
 - staff have more opportunities to observe outstanding teaching in order to improve their own practice.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that school leaders, including governors, analyse and use data more effectively to compare the performance of different groups of pupils so that they have a fuller picture of the impact the school's actions are having on raising standards.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school effectively and is well supported by senior leaders, staff and governors. Their actions are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching and a rise in pupils' achievement, with gaps between the performance of different groups of pupils closing. There is an orderly and productive atmosphere throughout the school.
- The school's systems for checking how well pupils are doing are thorough. School leaders have a clear view of how well the school is performing and where it needs to improve.
- School leaders, including middle leaders, closely monitor the quality of teaching and check and evaluate each pupil's performance. This information is used to provide pupils with extra help and support if they need it. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs. However, this data is not analysed or used as effectively as it might be.
- School leaders, including governors, have not focused clearly enough on the performance of different groups of pupils. This means that leaders have not fully analysed or evaluated the impact that their actions are having in closing gaps in performance between different groups of pupils.
- Nevertheless, all groups of pupils in the school are now making good progress and any gaps in the performance of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are closing. This shows the school's increasingly successful commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- School leaders use information about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement to check how well teachers are performing and to identify where further support or training is needed. This is helping to raise the quality of teaching. Staff are working increasingly effectively to improve their practice but there are too few opportunities for them to observe outstanding teaching.
- Information about pupils' achievement is also used effectively when making recommendations about teachers' pay.
- The curriculum is well planned, engages pupils effectively in their learning and promotes good behaviour. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum and to use and apply their mathematical skills both in mathematics lessons and in other subjects.
- There is a good and increasing range of activities, clubs, trips and visits to enhance the curriculum, including sport, drama, music and culture. Older pupils spoke enthusiastically about a residential outdoor activities trip and others mentioned visits to theatres and museums.
- The curriculum addresses discrimination effectively, fosters good relations and contributes well to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a set of core values that are well understood by all pupils. Pupils are tolerant and understanding, and show an improving knowledge of other cultures and religions. For example, there are links with a school in El Salvador and the school has been visited by a Muslim community group.
- British values are effectively addressed in lessons and through activities and assemblies. For example, the importance of democracy is successfully highlighted through elections for the school council. There is a strong focus on restorative justice throughout the school, with pupil peer mediators appropriately involved. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school's safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Staff and governors' training is up to date and systems and procedures are effectively implemented.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding increasingly successfully to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils in the classroom, individually and in small groups. In addition, it is used to provide extra support for vulnerable pupils and to improve links with parents. This is helping to close gaps in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- The school is using the additional primary school sport funding successfully. Specialist coaches take lessons, train staff and run activities. Consequently, more pupils are involved in a wider range of sports activities and the school participates in more sporting competitions than previously. This is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being and lifestyles.
- The local authority is providing effective monitoring and support for the school. This is contributing to improving the quality of teaching and is helping the school to move forward.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school. They are increasingly well informed about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Their understanding of the use and analysis of data about pupils' attainment and progress, and how these are linked to the quality of teaching, is improving because of new members joining the governing body and increased training. Governors know how the pupil premium is spent, but are less sure about the impact it is having on improving the achievement of

disadvantaged pupils. Nevertheless, governors have a clear view of how well the school is doing and where it needs to improve.

- Governors hold the school to account increasingly effectively by asking probing questions and by setting challenging targets as part of the headteacher's performance management. They also make sure that pupils' achievement is taken into account when making decisions about teachers' pay. They manage the school's finances effectively and make sure that the school meets its statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils get on well with one another and with adults in the school. There is a climate of mutual respect and a strong caring ethos throughout the school. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning and enables them to make good progress.
- Pupils are well motivated and have positive attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to staff and work well both independently and in groups. As a result, lessons typically proceed smoothly with no interruption to learning.
- School records and discussions with pupils show that poor behaviour is rare. Pupils say that there is no racist or discriminatory behaviour in school, and that on the few occasions when pupils misbehave, staff sort it out quickly and fairly.
- A small number of pupils occasionally show challenging behaviour, but staff manage this consistently and well. These pupils are supported in a caring and nurturing way, often involving the learning mentor. This leads to the improved behaviour of these pupils.
- The inspector observed good behaviour in lessons, in assembly and around the school. Pupils are considerate of one another and are polite to visitors. They mix well and play enthusiastically and safely together during breaks, and behave sensibly and responsibly in the hall at lunchtime.
- Pupils take on responsibility in a variety of different areas. They act as house captains and school councillors, and older pupils have been trained as peer mediators to help younger pupils. This makes a positive contribution to their strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils enjoy coming to and are proud of their school. They wear their uniforms smartly. Attendance has improved and is above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel very safe and are well cared for in the school.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They speak confidently about e-safety when using the internet, road safety and when cycling, for example.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of different kinds of bullying, including name calling and discrimination. They say that there is no bullying in the school at present but would report it if it occurred. They are very confident that the school would sort it out quickly.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey think that their child is happy, feels safe and is well looked after at school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good across the school. This was confirmed by the work in pupils' books, the school's records of pupils' progress and checks on the quality of teaching. Consequently, pupils in all classes are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Staff know pupils well and there are positive and productive relationships in the classroom. Staff set work that motivates and engages pupils in their learning. Pupils say that lessons are interesting, that they are pushed to do better and that they learn a lot.
- Reading is well taught and pupils' knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is increasingly secure. This ensures that pupils make good progress.
- The teaching of writing has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils write effectively in a variety of different styles and show an increasingly sound understanding of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The

inspector saw some powerful writing related to the anniversary of World War One and Martin Luther King's *I Have a Dream* speech, for example. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum.

- Pupils are well taught overall in mathematics and their knowledge of basic numeracy skills is increasingly secure. This enables them to make good progress. However, they are not given enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems, both in mathematics lessons and in other subjects.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and effectively. Staff use praise effectively and give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. However, there are too few checks that pupils are responding to this advice.
- Although staff typically have clear expectations of what pupils can achieve, these are not always high enough. Staff do not always make sure that the work set is challenging enough to enable pupils, including the most able, to learn as well as they could. Pupils are not always given work that is hard enough to enable them to make the best possible progress and reach the highest standards.
- However, Year 2 pupils were effectively challenged to improve their use of adjectives when writing about a character in *Harry and the Dinosaurs*. Questioning was used very effectively to encourage pupils to develop and improve their work, and as a result they made good progress.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and the learning mentor work increasingly well together to help pupils who find learning more difficult. This support is well focused to meet the needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, and ensures that any gaps in their progress and attainment are closing.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement is improving and they make good progress during their time in the school. From starting points in the early years that are generally below or well below those typical for children's ages, they reach standards that are close to average by the end of Year 6.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics are improving. In 2014, they were well below average but current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve standards that are much closer to average this year. This shows good progress from pupils' starting points. Evidence from pupils' work and observing learning in lessons confirms that pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are currently making good progress.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are also improving. In 2014, they were below average in reading writing, and mathematics. Inspection evidence and the school's most recent data show that all groups of pupils are now making good progress and achieving well. Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve improved results this year, with standards that are close to or above average. Almost all pupils are making expected progress and the proportion making more than expected progress is close to average.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because they have opportunities to read regularly and are well taught. Pupils' knowledge of phonics is improving, although the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check in 2014 was below average.
- The school has focused effectively on improving pupils' achievement in writing and there is an appropriate emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length in different subjects.
- Pupils' basic skills in mathematics are increasingly secure, but there are too few opportunities for them to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to solve practical problems both in mathematics lessons and in other subjects.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium are improving. In 2014, the standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 compared with other pupils nationally were almost five terms behind in mathematics, two-and-a-half terms behind in writing and two terms behind in reading. In comparison with other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils were around eight terms behind in mathematics, four terms behind in writing and three terms behind in reading.
- Disadvantaged pupils made similar progress to other pupils in the school and nationally in reading, but slower progress in writing and mathematics. The school's most recent data show that these gaps are closing because disadvantaged pupils are receiving increasingly effective support and making more rapid progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well and make good progress. Their needs are accurately identified and pupils receive good quality support from teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, they make progress more rapidly than other pupils.

- The most-able pupils make good progress and achieve well overall. They are increasingly given more demanding work. However, in common with other pupils, they are not always given work that is challenging enough to enable them to make the best possible progress and reach the highest standards.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children join the early years with skills and knowledge that are below or well below those typical for their age, especially in communication and language.
- Children make good progress from their individual starting points. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has improved steadily, although it was below average in 2014. Further improvement is expected this year. Children are increasingly well prepared to enter Key Stage 1.
- The quality of teaching is good. Staff make sure that learning activities are focused and purposeful, and that children are fully involved in their learning. Staff make good use of both the indoor and the relatively small outdoor environment. For example, children greatly enjoyed talking and writing about an imaginary walk through the jungle and the various animals they would meet. Staff encouraged children to use their imagination and creativity with a strong focus on developing spoken and written communication skills. As a result, the children made good progress.
- Children behave well and show good attitudes to learning in a safe and caring environment. They listen attentively to staff and concentrate well on what they are doing. They work well together and show care and concern for others.
- Staff work effectively to meet the needs of individual children. They check children's progress regularly and use this information to plan activities to further develop children's learning. Disadvantaged and vulnerable children are well supported and make good progress.
- There are increasingly strong links with parents and with other nursery providers. These ensure that children settle quickly into the early years provision.
- The early years provision is well led. Staff are well trained and have an accurate view of how well children are doing. This is helping to raise children's achievement.

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	119592
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	461743

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frances Hopkins
Headteacher	Dermot Hennigan
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2012
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