

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Bournes Row, Gregson Lane, Hoghton, Preston PR5 0DQ

Inspection dates	6–7 October 2015
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Through good leadership and management, the headteacher and governors have successfully improved the school since the previous inspection. As a result, teaching and consequently pupils' progress are now good.
- Staff use assessment information well in their planning. Their extensive work with other schools ensures that assessments are accurate, as the work in pupils' books shows.
- The feedback pupils receive through marking, and their responses to it, help to accelerate their learning.
- Children in the Reception class quickly settle into school routines. They, too, make good progress. Staff know their needs and teach them well.
- Behaviour is impeccable. Pupils are very mature in their approach to managing their own behaviour. They are highly motivated and their enthusiasm for learning is infectious. These are major factors in their rapidly improving progress.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They have a well-developed sense of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet and mobile phones. Staff are vigilant in these matters.
- Pupils' safety, well-being and welfare are at the heart of everything the school does. The provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Teaching of British values is an integral part of the curriculum.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Boys' writing, especially that of the most-able boys, requires improvement to bring it up to the same standard as girls.
- Pupils' enjoyment of reading and, occasionally, their learning is sometimes compromised by a lack of fluency or by their not fully understanding the text.
- The roles of those responsible for managing different subjects are not fully established.
- The criteria by which the school measures its success in meeting its priorities are not sufficiently related to improvements in pupils' progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' understanding and enjoyment of reading and writing by:
 - encouraging younger pupils to resist continuing to sound out words they can already read so that their reading becomes more fluent
 - ensuring that older pupils understand what they read so that they can interpret information accurately
 - improving the quality of boys' writing, especially for most-able boys, by increasing the amount of writing that boys do so that they demonstrate consistently their writing skills in their work.
- Increase the already developing skills of those who lead different subjects so that they become less reliant on the headteacher to support them.
- Strengthen the school's plans for improvement by ensuring that the criteria against which progress towards the priorities are measured focus more strongly on increasing pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The high aspirations and successful culture for learning that leaders and managers have established motivate the staff and underpin the pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes. Taken together, these features allow improvements in teaching and learning to take effect more quickly, and have enabled the school to become a good school.
- Staff fully subscribe to the school's aims and to the leaders' vision of becoming an outstanding school. They respond well to advice and guidance and very much appreciate the well-considered training and support they receive as part of the management of their performance.
- The roles of those who lead different subjects are developing well. However, the staff concerned still rely heavily on the headteacher for advice. Nevertheless, they now regularly monitor, evaluate and provide guidance for staff on how to improve further and therefore contribute successfully to improving pupils' progress.
- The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. It informs the priorities identified in the improvement plan. The targets set for staff, and ultimately for pupils, relate directly to those priorities.
- The criteria by which the school checks its progress towards its priorities now have the measurable milestones asked for at the previous inspection, but those milestones are not yet sharp enough. For example, they do not show how planned improvements in teaching, leadership and management are intended to increase – or by how much – the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support and wider learning opportunities to support the academic and personal development of the few pupils to whom it applies. This helps the pupils make the same good progress as other pupils.
- The school has used the primary sports funding well, increasing activities and staff expertise in teaching physical education and sport. Specialist coaching and a much wider range of sporting activities have resulted in all pupils participating in sport and representing their school in one sport or another in and beyond the normal school day. Successes in competitive sport are impressive given the size of the school.
- Pupils experience a broad, balanced and rich range of learning opportunities, including through outdoor learning in what the school knows as 'forest school', which enable them to develop well academically and personally. Reading and writing skills are threaded through different subjects; less so numeracy skills, although this is beginning to happen by relating mathematical learning to real life. Nevertheless, boys still write less than girls in different subjects and therefore do not use their writing skills as well.
- An extensive range of enrichment activities, including visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs, add excitement and motivate pupils to learn and develop in different ways. For example, in addition to sporting activities, pupils learn to cook, play musical instruments, take part in joint musical activities with other schools and compete in choir competitions.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development permeates all of the school's work. It also ensures that pupils have many opportunities to learn about British values and life in modern Britain. For example, as they learn about the rule of law, classes visit the magistrates' court, draw up rules to help the school run smoothly and support each other in making the right choices about how to behave in different situations.
- Electing school councillors and staging a mock election at the time of the general election gives pupils a developing understanding of democracy. They are also taught that everyone has rights, including the right to freedom, and to realise that those rights brings with them responsibilities.
- The school teaches pupils to respect and value different faiths, beliefs and cultures. It ensures they understand the dangers associated with listening to those who try to persuade them to do what they know to be wrong, for example by imposing extremist views, be it face-to-face or on the internet through websites or online games.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are rigorous in holding the school to account for how well the pupils are doing. They understand and analyse information about pupils' progress, regularly check the quality of teaching and learning and assist the headteacher in making decisions about pay based on teachers' performance.
 - Governors are well informed about the new curriculum and the systems the school is developing to assess pupils' progress. They focus strongly on ensuring pupils are prepared well for life in a modern, democratic and culturally diverse Britain.

- Governors engage well with staff, pupils, parents and the community. They attend a wide range of training to refine their skills so that they can fulfil their roles even better. Governors manage the school's finances well and monitor the impact their spending decisions have on outcomes for the pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders work closely with parents to ensure that pupils are safe and well supported. They are vigilant in vetting all those who work in school and in ensuring that the school site is secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders have raised teachers' expectations of what their pupils can achieve and teachers have risen to the challenges well. They are ambitious for their pupils, set high expectations for their learning and behaviour and instil in them a love of learning and a desire to do well. Parents to whom the inspector spoke are very pleased with the quality of teaching and the progress their children make.
- Teaching typically takes account of every pupil, from the least to the most able, including those who might need additional personal support from time to time. Teachers make good use of the information they gain from assessing and tracking pupils' academic and personal progress to plan new learning or revisit concepts pupils have not understood. They are rightly keeping the new assessment systems under review to ensure they provide the right information to help them to do these things.
- In most subjects, teachers ask pupils searching questions to help them to learn better. Rather than always giving pupils answers, they guide them towards investigating and challenging their own and each other's thinking. As a result, pupils consolidate and deepen their understanding and learn to find things out for themselves in different subjects. For example, in mathematics, staff guide pupils towards investigating ideas in a practical way. They encourage pupils to think about mathematics in real life and to draw on what they already know to solve problems.
- Good-quality feedback in all subjects, orally and in writing, helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Pupils pick up well on what they are told, correct their errors and are mindful of their targets as they learn to improve their own work and help others do the same. Homework also helps to increase progress because it relates to work being done in class.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well. Nevertheless, staff do not always check that pupils understand what they are reading. This means that pupils sometimes misinterpret the meaning of what they read and reach the wrong conclusions.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds) is also good. Here, however, staff do not encourage pupils sufficiently to cease sounding out words when they can read them. This means that, for younger pupils, their reading is sometimes not as fluent as it might be.
- Staff teach the skills of writing, including grammar, punctuation and spelling, well. Pupils put these skills to good use in extended pieces of writing. However, boys, especially the most able, do not demonstrate them as well as girls, because they usually write less and staff do not consistently encourage them to increase the quantity.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is outstanding. Some parents report that their children enjoy school so much, they even want to be there at weekends. They describe the school as one big family where everyone looks out for everyone else. Pupils echo these views.
- The pupils' heightened awareness of how to keep themselves safe in and out of school is constantly reinforced through the school's well-planned personal development programme. The programme provides constant reminders of the potential dangers associated with, for example, using the internet and mobile phones, or watching unsuitable television programmes.
- Pupils are very mature in their approach to how they might deal with any issues that might compromise their safety and welfare. They know to talk to a trusted adult should they have any concerns, and they trust the staff implicitly to help them.
- Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in school because even minor misdemeanours are quickly sorted. The school's behaviour and incident logs confirm this. Pupils report that, although there is some

falling out from time to time, 'We all learn to care for each other and that is important.'

- Following the example set by staff, pupils show high levels of respect for themselves, for others and for the world in which they live. They have a well-developed understanding of the nature and diversity of culture in modern Britain and of the importance of respecting those who might hold beliefs that differ from theirs. They gain much from visits to different places of worship and from links with a school in Gambia.
- Pupils talk about each being special in their own way, with different abilities and talents. They understand what it means to be a successful learner and praise the school for the way in which it ensures that everyone has the opportunity to succeed in something. For example, they talk about how people 'who are not sporty' can take part in every sport, while pupils who might not shine academically sometimes excel in sport. They celebrate each other's successes and report that they help to build confidence and boost self-esteem because they then feel valued.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils conduct themselves well at all times of the school day and they demonstrate high levels of self-awareness and self-discipline in their work and play. Attendance is above average and, apart from some illness last year, has been so for several years.
- Pupils want to do well and to help others to do well. They care for each other and for the environment. They are proud of their school and they look after it well. Displays in classrooms and around the school bear testimony to this.
- Pupils readily take on responsibility for ensuring the school operates smoothly and they fulfil their different roles well. As head boy or girl for the term, and as school councillors, prefects and other helpers, they ensure that everyone has a voice. Pupils and their parents appreciate the 'big friend, little friend' system that helps younger pupils settle into the rules and routines of school life.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- The school's most recent assessment information shows that, with minor variations in different classes and year groups, progress is good throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics. Work from this year and last shows that pupils also make good progress in skills in other subjects.
- Caution is needed when comparing the school's results with national averages because of the small numbers in each year group. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels for reading, writing and mathematics combined was above average in 2015 and standards are rising throughout the school. They are above those expected for the pupils' ages in all year groups.
- Staff increasingly relate pupils' learning to real life to show them how what they learn now will help them in the future. Thus the school prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education as well as for later life.
- Younger pupils make good progress in their early reading because of their good knowledge of phonics to help them read new words. However, they sometimes continue to sound out words they already know. Their reading then becomes less fluent and they cannot always follow the gist of the story, or enjoy what they are reading.
- Older pupils can read new words but do not always understand what they mean, and they sometimes misinterpret information because they have not deduced accurately the meaning behind the written word. Nevertheless, they too make good progress in reading. Their progress is accelerating because of the emphasis throughout the school on engendering enjoyment of reading for pleasure as well as for learning.
- Pupils present their written work well. Their handwriting is neat and legible. Pupils make good progress in understanding how to write in different styles and why it is important to be able to do so. Their grammar, punctuation and spelling are mostly good. Boys write less than girls and their longer pieces of writing do not demonstrate the skills that the work in their literacy books show they have developed. Therefore, while their overall progress is good, they continue to do less well than girls in assessments.
- Pupils learn basic mathematical skills from an early age. They develop mastery in these skills as they grow older and do more investigative work that requires them to apply their mathematical learning in everyday situations. This was particularly evident in Years 5 and 6, when some pupils investigated different shapes while others learned the importance of measuring accurately.

- Pupils use their literacy skills well in different subjects. Past work in different subjects and recent work in geography demonstrate this well, particularly as pupils researched and documented the difference between the United Kingdom and Great Britain.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, as do pupils who qualify for the pupil premium funding. There are too few of these pupils to give further detail without identifying individuals. However, as with all other pupils, the school checks their progress from their different starting points and can demonstrate success with each one.
- With the exception of some boys in writing, the most-able pupils are now making good progress and reaching higher standards than in the past in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils very much enjoy the wide range of sporting activities they now have. They understand the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating in maintaining a healthy lifestyle. They praise the school for the equality of opportunity it promotes in ensuring that, in their words, 'even if you're not sporty, there is something for you'. They also appreciate how some pupils who might not be as successful academically blossom in sport and the impact their success has on their self-esteem and confidence.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start school with skills that are typical for their age. Close liaison with parents and with staff in the on-site private nursery ensures that Reception staff get to know the children well as individuals before they enter school. This means that they can and do direct additional funding and support to where it is most needed so that all children can learn successfully and make good progress.
- The many visits that children make to the school while in nursery include having daily lunch with Reception children. The children therefore settle quickly into the well-established routines for this age group. Parents have high praise for the school in all of these aspects and for the rapid progress their children make. They describe the transition as 'seamless'. The school's close working partnership with parents benefits pupils' learning and personal development and contributes to the pupils' good progress.
- Children's safety, welfare and well-being are of paramount importance in the school. Children are safe and they are cared for well. They are taught how to be safe when using toys and equipment and how to seek help from an adult if they are concerned about anything.
- Teaching is good and children make good progress in all aspects of their learning. They become successful learners from the start. They listen and concentrate well, share and take turns, and become increasingly able to do and find things out for themselves. Staff know just when to intervene to help children to understand better what they are learning, or to question them to help them think and move their learning on.
- Assessment procedures are thorough and accurate and information about children's progress is communicated well to parents. Learning is equally good indoors and out. It is quickly adjusted in response to what the children show they know and can do at any given point. Early literacy, numeracy and personal development skills are promoted effectively in all learning.
- Occasionally, activities are too complicated and pupils start to lose interest or do not learn as well. This happened, for example, when they had to think of too many denominations of coins during a whole-class session and became confused. Their behaviour started to slip, but it was immediately checked and they responded well.
- Leadership and management of the early years is good. The curriculum is planned effectively with exciting activities indoors and out. For example, some children were eager to talk about the slugs and insects they found in the forest school area as they learned the importance of using their eyes to look carefully. At the same time, other children were keen to show their clay model of owls and explain how they had used fir cones to add texture for the wings and conkers to make indents for the eyes.
- Children thoroughly enjoy their learning and they are prepared well for their work in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	119669
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10002248

This inspection 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	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Telford
Headteacher	Mrs Val Plant
Telephone number	01254 853473
Website	www.stjosephsbrindle.com
Email address	secretary@st-josephs-hoghton.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 September 2013

Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average as is the proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium (additional government funding) provides support.
- Children in the early years, in this school the Reception class, attend full time and are taught in one class. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in mixed-age classes.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.
- The school is part of the Yarrow Teaching Alliance, a group of schools that work together to provide support and professional development for each other.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in parts of 10 lessons, the headteacher joining her for three of them.
- The inspector analysed the work in the books of pupils currently in the school and also sampled those from last year to gain information about pupils' progress over time. She did this alongside analysing the school's most recent information about pupils' progress.
- A few pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to the inspector, who also listened to older pupils read texts and worksheets during their lessons and sampled sessions where staff were teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make).
- The inspector spoke to pupils and met with key leaders, 10 members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to gain their views of the school.
- As well as a range of documents relating to school improvement, the inspector examined policies and procedures relating to teaching, safeguarding pupils and provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- The views of the 27 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account and the inspector gained the views of a number of parents at first hand as they brought their children to school.
- Eight staff completed Ofsted's questionnaire for staff. The inspector took account of their responses.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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