

# St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School

Preston Old Road, Feniscowles, Blackburn, BB2 5EP

## Inspection dates

8–9 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

- The headteacher, deputy and assistant headteacher are a strong senior leadership team with a shared ambition to provide the very best for every pupil.
- Leaders and governors have addressed successfully the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. They have established an enthusiastic staff team, committed to driving forward improvement at a good rate.
- The school is an extremely happy community where pupils feel very safe and are well cared for. Pupils' personal development and welfare at the school is outstanding. Behaviour is exemplary.
- Pupils are extremely well mannered, polite and courteous. They take responsibility for caring and supporting each other and show great respect.
- Children settle well into the early years where learning gets off to a good start. A broad range of interesting activities enables them to explore, experiment and grow in confidence.
- The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now consistently good or better. Pupils work hard in lessons because learning is engaging and motivating and they learn without fear of failure.
- Assessment is used well to set next steps in learning, and 'Fix It' time helps pupils know what they need to do to improve.
- Improvements in the progress pupils make has led to more of them reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.
- Work in and out of lessons, as well as numerous visits and clubs, provide pupils with interesting and memorable experiences. These contribute successfully to pupils' great enjoyment of school and promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs are provided for well and supported effectively to help them achieve their best.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not yet result in outstanding achievement overall.
- The good and sometimes outstanding progress pupils make is not yet fully consistent across the school, especially in writing.
- The leadership and management skills of middle leaders are not yet developed sufficiently well to have significant enough impact on improving the quality of teaching and pupil achievement.

## **Full report**

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding in order to raise achievement further by providing continued opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding practice.
- Ensure that the good, and sometimes outstanding progress pupils make is fully consistent across the school, especially in writing, by providing additional support and challenge where this is required.
- Develop the role of middle leaders by further developing their leadership and management skills so that they have a greater impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and her able deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. They are ambitious for the school and share both vision and commitment. Staff feel valued and are keen to develop their skills further and do the very best for the pupils.
- Actions since the last inspection have helped drive improvements in teaching and achievement, and leaders know what they need to do to improve the school further. However, although there are good systems in place, these are not fully embedded. Not enough teaching is consistently outstanding, as this will ensure that achievement is stronger over time.
- Senior leaders have established a regular system of checking the quality of teaching and learning. This gives them a clear picture of what has to be done next in order to improve. It is shared with staff on a weekly basis so that there is a constant focus on improvement by the whole staff team.
- There is a robust system in place to manage the performance of staff, with clear targets aimed at improving outcomes. Training is linked well to need, and staff are appreciative of growing opportunities to share their practice, learn from each other and to observe outstanding practice in other schools. However, these opportunities are not yet developed for teaching assistants.
- Pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Regular, closely monitored assessments of pupils' progress ensure that senior leaders and staff quickly pick up on pupils who are not doing as well as they should. Additional support is put in place to help these pupils make better progress, but the impact of this is not yet fully consistent across the school, especially in writing.
- Middle leaders have begun to monitor provision and pupil progress in their subjects. However, as a number of staff are new to leading their subject responsibility, their role is not yet fully developed. The school recognises the need for, and importance of, middle leader training and has plans in place.
- The rich and varied curriculum is organised around well-designed topics, which are supported by numerous visits, providing pupils with varied and interesting learning opportunities. These memorable experiences contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across a range of subjects to enhance their learning and progress. A wide range of clubs, including a daily breakfast club, support pupils' learning and enjoyment of school.
- Worship themes are used well to introduce a weekly 'big question' for pupils to discuss in class. This provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of fundamental British values. For example, through a theme on 'trusting others', pupils have explored tolerance and an understanding of the beliefs of others, as well as the dangers of extremism.
- The school is committed to all pupils having an equal opportunity and ensuring that no one experiences discrimination. The varied curriculum and range of opportunities offered outside of school hours ensures that all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, achieve good or better outcomes. Sporting and other out-of-school events provide rich opportunities for pupils to spend time with others from more diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- Governors ensure that pupil premium funding is used effectively. Disadvantaged pupils are supported well, both personally and academically, enabling them to be successful and take part in everything the school offers.
- The school uses its primary school sport funding effectively to ensure that pupils learn and take part in a wide range of sports. This has provided them with more opportunities for competitive sport, and has enabled opportunities for pupils to take part in sports which are new to them, such as archery and boccia. Teachers' subject knowledge and skills are enhanced by the work they do alongside specialist coaches.
- Effective systems for safeguarding are in place, which meet requirements in all aspects. All staff, including those new to the school, have received appropriate training and pupils are taught well about ways to keep themselves safe. There are robust systems in place to identify swiftly those pupils who may be at risk of harm, and clear procedures to follow these up.
- The local authority has provided appropriate levels of advice and support since the last inspection. This has been effective, together with support from the diocese, in helping the school on its journey to becoming a good school.
- Parents and carers appreciate all that the school does to ensure that their child is happy, and the vast

majority agree that their child feels safe at school.

- Although the online questionnaires showed that a small proportion of parents expressed a number of concerns, the vast majority of a large number of parents spoken to during the inspection were happy with all that the school had to offer. Analysis of the whole school consultation carried out in summer 2015 also showed that the vast majority of parents were happy with the school.

#### ■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body, supported by the local authority and the diocese has taken swift and decisive action to bring about school improvement following the previous inspection. As a result, the impact of the work of the governing body is good.
- Governor committees were set up following the last inspection to focus on teaching, learning and progress. This has enabled governors to have a much clearer understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that need to be developed. As a result, governors know the school well. They visit the school to gain first-hand information and carefully consider the reports provided for them by senior leaders and subject leaders.
- Governors check the school's performance regularly and governor minutes show that they ask challenging questions of school leaders to ensure that they are accountable.
- They ensure that pay progression is dependent on sufficiently good performance and have high expectations of staff who are paid to take on extra responsibilities.
- Although the governors of the school are currently in a transitional phase, the core group are strong and know the school extremely well. Support from the diocese is also in place.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- Senior leaders and governors have addressed successfully any weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment since the last inspection. As a result, the gaps in learning are being addressed, and teaching has improved to being consistently good or better. It does not yet, however, result in outstanding achievement across the school.
- Well-planned lessons carefully build on what pupils already know. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were expected to improve their writing by using complex sentences and subordinate clauses, which they had learned about previously. Teachers regularly check where pupils are up to and give them clear guidance on next steps. 'Fix It' time is made available daily for pupils to check and improve their work, clarify misconceptions or try next step challenges. Teachers are then able to pitch work appropriately to move pupils on swiftly.
- Skilful questioning is used consistently well by teachers and some teaching assistants to check pupils' understanding, clarify misconceptions and make them think for themselves. High levels of mutual respect and supportive relationships raise pupils' self esteem and confidence so that they learn without fear of failure.
- Pupils have positive attitudes and are eager to learn because teachers plan interesting lessons, which are engaging and motivating. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and explain tasks clearly so that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn.
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop what they have learned in reading, writing and sometimes mathematics in other subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants provide younger pupils with a range of activities to use their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to improve their skills in reading and writing. Teachers promote a love of reading. Pupils borrow books from the school library and enjoy regular class storytime.
- Pupil premium funding is used well and disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and low attaining pupils, who may have gaps in their learning, are supported well either through focused teaching in class, in small groups or individually, to make sure they achieve all that they are capable of. More-able pupils are often provided with additional challenges to deepen their learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** are outstanding

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- St Paul's Primary School is a happy community where pupils enjoy coming to a school of which they are extremely proud.
- They love to learn and want to do well. Pupils are enthusiastic, work hard in lessons and are self-disciplined. In nearly every lesson pupils can be seen working together harmoniously, helping each other, taking turns and discussing their work sensibly. This contributes well to their good, and sometimes outstanding, progress.
- Pupils make a positive contribution to the life of their school and the local community and this is a real strength of the school. Year 6 pupils are involved in a range of responsibilities to support the work of the school, including acting as 'gardeners' to support, nurture and be role models for their younger peers, 'the seeds' in Reception class.
- A kindness award is given weekly and pupils can earn a place at the 'captain's table' for kind actions linked to the school's values. Pupils and their families support local and national charities, including Macmillan Cancer Care and a local food bank.
- The school and grounds are immaculate, demonstrating pupils' respect for property and resources. When showing inspectors the outdoor garden learning area, pupils were eager to share how they had recently sold their home-grown produce to parents.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding, and pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school. Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire agree that their children are happy, feel safe and that the school looks after their children well. Security of the school premises is robust.
- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through assemblies and personal, social and health education. Visitors, including police, the fire service and road safety teams support this learning well. Pupils have a particularly good awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet and understand about the different forms of bullying.
- Although the online Parent View questionnaires showed that some parents were concerned about bullying, pupils say that bullying rarely happens and that any incidents are always sorted out very quickly. None of the significant number of parents spoken to had any concerns about bullying, the whole school consultation did not flag up concerns and stability at the school is high.
- Weekly class research linked to worship themes allows pupils excellent opportunities to debate moral issues linked to the promotion of British Values. For example, in a class reflection book, pupils' comments related to the question 'why should we not stereotype?' showed significant understanding of respect and tolerance.
- Where pupils are involved in alternative provision, there are close working relationships between the two settings to ensure that the very best support is provided to meet personal needs and welfare requirements.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' manners are exemplary. They behave exceptionally well at all times of the school day. They are very kind and considerate towards adults and one another, demonstrating the values the school instils into them from the earliest age. They hold open doors for each other and for adults and show great respect and courtesy.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their high levels of attendance and very low levels of persistent absence. They understand the importance of regular attendance and the difference this makes to how well they learn.
- Pupils are proud of the outstanding behaviour in their school and say that any disagreements are sorted out quickly. They know and understand what is expected of them as they conduct themselves around school and in lessons. Pupils make sure that they follow these clear expectations in an exemplary way. Consequently, low level disruption is extremely rare.

## **Outcomes for pupils** are good

- The strong focus by school leaders and governors placed on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the last inspection is having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Unpublished 2015 data shows the proportion of pupils making expected progress in writing has improved significantly and is now broadly in line with national 2014 figures. Reading is broadly in line with national expectations, but there has been a dip in mathematics in 2015 from above national figures in 2014. Although at the last inspection most pupils made expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics, too few made better than expected progress. The unpublished 2015 data outcomes show a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils making better-than-expected progress to well above previous years and above the 2014 national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The high proportion of more-able pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics reflects the improved challenge for more-able pupils across the school, along with opportunities for them to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Increasingly, the most-able pupils in other year groups are making at least good, and often better, progress in reading and mathematics. However, this is not yet consistent across the school, especially in writing.
- Unpublished 2015 data outcomes show the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development at the end of their Reception year to be above the national average. This demonstrates good progress from their starting points and prepares them well for the Key Stage 1 curriculum. The proportion of pupils reaching expectations in the Year 1 phonics test has improved since the last inspection and is above the national average.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was above national averages in 2014 and significantly above national attainment overall. This was maintained in 2015 in reading and mathematics. A dip in writing in 2015 reflects the low proportion of these pupils reaching expected levels in literacy at the end of their Reception year. Although expected progress has been made, this has not been sufficiently rapid to bring attainment in writing in line with reading and mathematics.
- Well-targeted support is provided by teachers and teaching assistants for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This support within lessons and in additional group or one-to-one sessions has enabled almost all of these pupils to make at least expected progress and, for some, better than expected progress.
- Additional support and challenge for low-attaining pupils, to help them catch up with their peers, has been very successful. The proportion of these pupils making and exceeding expected progress by the time they leave Year 6 is above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they make good progress as they move through school, with significant proportions making better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Due to small numbers, outcomes at the end of Year 6 for these pupils are not identified separately.
- Teachers make sure that the skills pupils learn in reading, writing and mathematics are used well in other subjects. Consequently, the good and outstanding progress made by all groups of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is reflected in other subjects. All groups of pupils are therefore well prepared for the next stage of their education, across a range of subjects as they leave Year 6.

## Early years provision

**is good**

- Children settle quickly into the Reception class after just a short time in school because of the high levels of care and the clear routines that are in place to support them.
- Good links are made with parents and preschool settings before the children start school to ensure that each child's start to school life is as smooth as possible. Adults make sure they get to know the children quickly and place high importance on personal, social and emotional development to ensure that each and every child feels safe and happy. Praise is used well to boost children's confidence and self-esteem.
- Most children enter Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding typical for their age. They make good progress because of the good teaching they receive through an appropriate balance of carefully planned adult-led activities, and opportunities for independent learning. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development increased significantly in 2015, to above the national average. Improvements in reading, writing and mathematics were particularly evident and, as a result, children are increasingly well prepared for the Year 1 curriculum. Boys' writing skills, however, still lag behind those of girls.
- Since taking up her post, the new early years leader has worked closely with staff to establish an attractive and purposeful learning environment. The indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced and well

used, children readily choose activities which interest them, to explore and experiment. They are willing and eager to talk about their work and readily engage in conversation with adults. During the inspection, children chatted happily with adults and each other, recalling the story of Noah. Children behave well, take turns responsibly and share resources. However, opportunities are not always maximised for children to develop their physical skills by playing on tricycles and other large equipment in the larger outdoor area.

- Phonics skills are constantly reinforced as adults work with children in small groups and through conversations during independent play. This means that any misconceptions are quickly addressed and correct skills are practised.
- The early years curriculum is interesting and well planned. Adults monitor closely children's progress and take account of what they need to do to improve when planning what to do next. Consequently, all make good progress, including pupils with disabilities and special educational needs and children who are disadvantaged.
- An electronic system of recording children's progress has been introduced, and runs alongside other observations made. As yet, however, the use of this is not developed enough to allow parents to contribute to the assessment process.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119649
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002284

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Lead Governor</b>	Jennifer Gardiner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Monaghan
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 201495
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stpauls.feniscowles.co.uk">www.stpauls.feniscowles.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:st.pauls.feniscowles@blackburn.gov.uk">st.pauls.feniscowles@blackburn.gov.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25–26 September 2013

## Information about this school

- The school is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school.
- It is a Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided School.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through pupil premium is significantly below that found in most schools. (The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is well below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Governors provide a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- Since the previous inspection there have been several staffing changes, including the substantive headteacher returning from maternity leave and new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher appointments.
- The local authority and diocese have provided support to the school since the last inspection.
- The governing body is currently in a stage of transition and the diocese is supporting the school to manage this.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. This included observing learning in classes, including two joint observations with the headteacher and also observations of a number of small groups working with teaching assistants.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, and talked to pupils about their enjoyment of reading. They looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about their work. Wall displays were scrutinised.
- Pupils were spoken to informally as they played at breaktimes. Inspectors visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school and at the start and end of the school day. They met formally with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors met with four governors. They spoke to local authority representatives, a representative from the diocese and met with members of school staff.
- Inspectors had conversations with parents, including a significant number at the start of the school day. They took account of 79 responses to Parent View and the school's most recent whole school consultation. They also considered 32 returns to the staff questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's most recent information on pupils' progress and attainment across the school, the school's view of its effectiveness and its plans for improvement and external views of the school. Inspectors also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding, along with minutes of the governing body.

## Inspection team

Gillian Burrow, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Ofsted Inspector

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