

# St William's Catholic Primary School

Garstang Road, Pilling, Preston PR3 6AL

<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 April 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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 school has improved because governors took decisive action to improve leadership and management and minimise the impact of staff absence on pupils' learning.
- Leadership and management are good. The acting headteacher swiftly gained the respect of staff, pupils and parents by setting high expectations, and established a culture where everyone is a valued part of the school community.
- The quality of teaching is good. Keenly aware of the pupils' different ages and stages, teachers plan pupils' learning well. They are ably assisted by skilled support staff. As a result, all pupils are once again making good progress.
- The curriculum is planned well. The new systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are becoming increasingly well established.
- Reception children make good progress. Staff prepare them well for their work in Year 1.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour, their enthusiasm for school and their eagerness to learn all contribute greatly to their success.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They describe it as 'amazing' and 'fantastic' because of what they learn. Several echoed one comment made, namely: 'Every morning I'm glad I go to school'.
- Pupils feel safe at school and the school keeps them safe. They relish responsibility and readily care for and help each other. They have a good understanding of British values.
- Parents acknowledge that the school has been through a difficult time but report overwhelmingly that they are once again very satisfied with it.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Weaknesses remain in spelling, grammar and punctuation in key stage 2, especially when pupils write in different subjects.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to broaden and deepen their understanding of mathematics by completing a wide range of reasoning and problem-solving tasks.
- Although in the process of appointing one, the school does not have a permanent headteacher, and in some subjects it is unclear where leadership responsibility rests.
- The school's action plan does not focus enough on measuring the impact of the actions identified on pupils' progress.

## Full report

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

- Help pupils to make even faster progress in key stage 2 by:
  - ensuring that pupils give due attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation in all written work
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to reason mathematically and solve problems to broaden and deepen their understanding of mathematics.
  
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - securing the long-term leadership of the school
  - finding ways to distribute subject leadership so that the systems in place to assess, track and improve pupils' progress in all subjects can be implemented more effectively
  - including in the school's action plan measurable milestones against which improvements in pupils' progress can be more precisely checked.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The acting headteacher is respected by staff as a teacher as well as a leader. Staff very much appreciate how she has involved them in reviewing policies and making decisions about the way forward.
- Discussions about how to improve teaching and learning and to address the challenges that having only two mixed-age classes present have created a firm foundation on which to build. Staff work purposefully towards securing the best possible teaching and learning for pupils.
- Staff morale is high and all staff are ambitious for their pupils. Responses to the staff questionnaire showed that staff feel they are being led well and that the school is better than at the previous inspection. Parents expressed similar views, which were further endorsed by their responses to the online questionnaire.
- The local authority has played a significant part in helping the school to improve. Responding to a request from governors, local authority staff helped school leaders to minimise the effect of staff absences on pupils' progress. Leaders have made the best use of this support and now show that they can sustain the improvements made so far.
- The curriculum is planned well. The breadth and variety of activities successfully encourage pupils to reflect on their learning, and on themselves and their behaviour. They also help pupils to acquire a good understanding of what equality and good citizenship mean in today's culturally diverse British society.
- Mindful of the mixed-age pupils in each class, as well as the different stages pupils are at, rich and interesting topics and experiences engage pupils and often motivate them to do further work at home, over and above their normal homework. Given the size of the school, there is a good range of extra-curricular clubs, some of which take place at lunchtimes, and others at the end of the day.
- The school uses its additional sports funding well to help improve the skills of staff in teaching physical education, to increase the range of sports and exercise activities available to pupils and to enable pupils to take part in competitive sport with other schools. Pupils appreciate that all of this is important because otherwise, as a small school, their opportunities in sport would be limited.
- The additional funding allocated to the school for disadvantaged pupils (the pupil premium) has ensured that these pupils make at least the same good progress as other pupils. Leaders check that additional help, such as individual tuition, makes a difference to pupils' learning and, where relevant, personal development.
- Staff performance is managed well. The objectives set for staff match the priorities in the school's action plan, which in turn arise out of the school's accurate evaluation of its effectiveness. Staff training is tailored to individual needs and leads to improvement. Nevertheless, while the school's stated priorities are the right ones, the criteria by which progress towards them is measured are not closely enough aligned to direct improvement in pupils' progress.
- Using the new assessment systems, leaders and teachers track closely the progress of each pupil in reading, writing and mathematics and also in physical education. They use what they find to adjust the curriculum or pupils' learning, where necessary providing additional support to fill gaps or to deepen pupils' understanding. There are assessment procedures for other subjects, but they are not being used as effectively. This is because, outside the subjects mentioned, the leadership of different subjects is not yet fully established.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance is good. Governors are passionate about securing the best for pupils and increasing the number on roll, and have a realistic, strategic view of how to achieve their aims. They made good use of the external review requested at the previous inspection to sharpen their understanding of their roles and responsibilities and they now fulfil them well.
  - Governors attend a range of training to keep them up to date and to sharpen their ability to ask pertinent questions of leaders. They make good use of the information they receive, adding to it with a range of visits to check how well the school is doing.
  - Systems for managing staff performance are all in place. Governors ensure that the objectives set for staff contribute to achieving the priorities they set in the school's action plan.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All training, including for child protection and first aid, is up to date. The school rigorously checks the suitability of all adults working with pupils and ensures that the school site is as secure as it can be. Risk assessments are carried out for all activities. Fire drills and checks on electrical, gas and water safety are all up to date.

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

- Staff capitalise well on the pupils' desire to succeed by setting high expectations for learning and behaviour, which pupils meet exceedingly well. Relationships are excellent throughout the school and pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- When planning learning, staff make good links between subjects so that pupils can see how what they learn in one can help them in another. A good example is the way reading, writing and mathematical skills are threaded throughout pupils' work as, in both classes, they learn about the Great Fire of London.
- The staff's good subject knowledge is evident in effective questioning that first checks what pupils already know before deepening their thinking and encouraging them to find things out for themselves. This was noted particularly in Years 1 and 2, where the teacher regularly sends pupils to check the vibrant displays for information or to ensure they spell and count accurately. Thus, even at this young age, pupils are developing an ability to constantly check their own work.
- In Years 3 to 6, staff successfully encourage pupils to mark their own and each other's work, sensitively commenting on what has been done well and what could be improved. Pupils work together well as they do so and they help each other to learn.
- Staff are getting to grips with implementing the new marking policy but are not yet using it consistently. Nevertheless, pupils can explain what the new approaches are and how they will help them to learn better and faster. They report that teachers 'keep telling us things until we understand' and they appreciate the targets that keep their learning on track.
- Skilled support staff have been instrumental in providing continuity for the pupils through what has been a difficult time for the school. They work closely with teachers, and help different pupils at different times, not least by breaking down learning into the smaller steps that some, including the small number who have special educational needs or disability, need in order to succeed.
- Staff have a good understanding of how to teach mixed-age classes. They are skilled at starting different year or ability groups off, working with one then circulating, teaching and improving the learning of each remaining group in turn. These skills contribute greatly to the good progress all pupils are now making, and to their ability to work on their own to improve their learning.
- The teaching of reading, including phonics (letters and the sounds they represent), is consistently good. While good overall, the teaching of writing and mathematics is more variable. This is because:
  - pupils do not have enough opportunities to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts by solving real-life problems and mathematical reasoning activities
  - staff do not always encourage pupils to apply what they have learned in literacy to all of their written work. Therefore, needless errors occur in spelling or grammar.

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

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as their good attendance shows. They also enjoy the good range of out-of-school clubs, sporting activities and competitions with other schools, which, they report, change termly so that there is something for everyone over the course of a year.
- Pupils report unequivocally that they feel safe at school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including when using computers and mobile phones. They know the dangers associated with, for example, social media sites or the misuse of drugs.
- Pupils understand what bullying is. They are adamant that there is none and, to their knowledge, never has been any. The school's records bear this out. Pupils talk of everyone getting along together well and say they 'just help each other' with everything.

- Staff, pupils and parents talk of the school as a family where everyone cares for everyone else. Pupils have a high degree of confidence in the staff. They talk, for example, about how the staff will always listen to them, no matter what, taking the time to understand what they mean and what they feel. They particularly praise the support some pupils received following a death in the family.
- Pupils' personal development is further enhanced as they learn the importance of contributing positively to the school and wider community, including the church. As representatives at the pupil parliament, as school councillors, eco councillors and monitors, they learn the value of democracy and the right of everyone to be heard and treated equally.
- Not one pupil could think of anything that could be changed to make the school better.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. It contributes greatly to the pupils' good progress and was an important factor in keeping that progress good despite the difficulties caused by staff absences.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They report that fairness, equality and respect are very important values to which everyone should subscribe, and that rules are important for the school and, ultimately, society to function well.
- Pupils respond quickly to instructions. They know that by doing so, they are helping each other to make the most of learning time. They appreciate the awards for good behaviour and know that there are sanctions for less-than-good behaviour, but say that these only very rarely have to be called upon.
- Pupils' behaviour is equally outstanding in lessons and around the school, including during a wet lunchtime. They readily settled for playing different games indoors before returning happily to their afternoon's work.
- There is plenty for pupils to do at play- and lunchtimes, and older pupils readily look out for younger ones. The arrangements for eating lunch are particularly impressive as pupils eat together as one family, amicably sharing stories of the morning or from home.
- Pupils also respond well to the lunchtime staff, including when being offered new, healthy eating options to try ahead of their being included on the daily menu. Pupils are open to new ideas and understand how eating healthily and taking regular exercise can improve their health and well-being.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

**are good**

- All pupils, from the least to the most able, disadvantaged or not, are making good progress in relation to their different starting points. With such small numbers, typically between two and four pupils in each year group, it is not possible to make realistic comparisons between the attainment of pupils in this school and that of other schools nationally, or between different groups of pupils.
- Pupils read well, widely and often, and the school encourages them to do so. They enjoy reading fiction and non-fiction books and researching information on the computer. They gain a great deal from doing so. Work in pupils' literacy and numeracy books and 'learning logs' shows a good range of learning across all subjects.
- Younger pupils use their good knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) to help them break down and read new words. They are also beginning to use clues from pictures and from the text to do so. Older pupils are developing good comprehension skills. By Year 6, they talk knowledgeably about what can be inferred from the written word.
- Pupils show good ability to write in different styles and for different purposes in literacy and in other subjects. This was observed as early as Year 1, where pupils were learning to write newspaper reports telling of the Great Fire of London.
- By Year 6, pupils' writing is often lively and interesting, and shows that they have undertaken additional research on their own. Nevertheless, they too often forget to use their spelling, grammatical and punctuation skills well in all of their writing and this detracts from its quality. Nor are they consistently reminded to do so.

- Most pupils have reasonably good recall of mathematical facts, including multiplication tables, relevant to their ages. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated this well as they rose to the challenge of doing long division involving large numbers, and checking their answers using their knowledge of multiplication. Nevertheless, pupils' books show that, in Years 3 to 6, they sometimes have to do too many exercises, repeatedly getting them correct, before being challenged to use and deepen their mathematical understanding by solving real-life mathematical problems.

## Early years provision

is good

- Children's attainment on entry to the school varies from typical for their age to below in communication, language, literacy and number. Because of the small numbers involved, it is not possible to make any generalisation because it would mean identifying individual children. What can be said is that, in the past two years, all children achieved a good level of development, and children currently in Reception are making good progress.
- Despite changes in staffing, the leadership and management of the provision for this age group are good, as is the quality of teaching. Staff are skilled at meeting the needs of Reception-aged children within the mixed-age class. They plan learning for each child, taking account of their individual stages of learning.
- Children behave exceptionally well, showing maturity beyond their years. They listen attentively during joint sessions with pupils in Years 1 and 2, and when working on the exciting learning activities planned for them. They readily share equipment, take turns and help each other. They are eager to share their learning, for example when showing the inspector how they could use a timeline to sequence events, and sharing their knowledge of how Samuel Pepys recorded the Great Fire of London for posterity.
- Early reading, writing and mathematical skills are developing well. This was evident as children learned how to write a report on the Great Fire by recording relevant facts in sentences with capital letters and full stops, and then reading their reports to others. Letter formation is mostly good and attempts at spelling show that the children's phonics skills are developing well.
- Although there is still some reversal, children are beginning to form numerals correctly, to add and subtract and to write simple number sentences. They also have a basic understanding of simple shapes.
- Staff pay good attention to the children's health, safety and well-being and they interact well with the children to move their learning on. They teach the children how to be safe and how to use equipment safely, be it sharp pencils inside, or logs, planks of wood and other construction materials outside.
- Staff are skilled at picking up on what children say and using it to move their learning on, yet leaving children plenty of opportunity to use their own imagination. This was evident as children worked out how best to construct the different houses the three little pigs tried to build to keep the wolf out.
- Children's learning is recorded, assessed and tracked well. The combination of files and learning journeys provides a comprehensive record of how well each child is doing. Good links with pre-school providers, including the on-site private nursery, ensure that transition into the Reception class is made as easy as possible for the children. Links with parents are also good. Parents appreciate how the school encourages them to become increasingly involved in their children's learning.
- Despite the large number of strengths, more remains to be done to make outdoor learning an integral part of the curriculum for this age group, and to organise the area better to make it more accessible for the children. Leaders know this. The school has made improving outdoor provision a priority in its action plan.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119630
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10012195

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	19
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Butterworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ela Wort
<b>Acting headteacher</b>	Samantha Solloway
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 790389
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-williams.lancs.sch.uk">www.st-williams.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@st-williams.lancs.sch.uk">head@st-williams.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 July 2014

## Information about this school

- This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. It has two mixed-age classes, one for Reception-aged children and pupils in Years 1 and 2, and the other for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for disadvantaged pupils) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- There has been significant disruption in staffing since the previous inspection, including in the leadership of the school, because of long-term absences.
- The school currently has an acting headteacher, who has been in place since November 2015. As acting assistant headteacher, she was seconded to the school at the end of the summer term 2014 to provide support for the headteacher.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in parts of 11 lessons, two of which she observed jointly with the acting headteacher. She also analysed work in the books of pupils currently in the school, as well as the school's most recent information about pupils' progress.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Year 1 read, and sampled sessions where staff were teaching phonics (the sounds that letters represent).
- Discussions were held with key leaders, seven members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to gain their views of the school.
- The inspector spoke with virtually all pupils, formally and informally. She also took account of the 15 responses to the online questionnaire for pupils.
- A range of documents relating to school improvement were examined, along with policies and procedures relating to teaching, safeguarding pupils, and provision for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability.
- The inspector gained the views of a number of parents at first hand as they brought their children to school. She also took account of the views of the 16 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- The inspector spoke to staff and took account of the views of the seven members of staff who completed Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

## Inspection team

Doris Bell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector



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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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