

St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Blackburn Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 0AA

Inspection dates	8–9 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
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 excellent leadership of the headteacher is underpinned by his unswerving commitment to improving pupils' life chances. Staff and pupils have risen well to the high expectations the headteacher has of them. As a result, the school is better than when it was last inspected.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The skilled deputy headteacher leads teaching by example and staff are very receptive to the help they receive to improve their work.
- All groups of pupils, from the least to the most able, are making equally good progress. Gaps in the attainment between disadvantaged pupils and that of other pupils nationally are closing.
- Good leadership in the early years means that standards are rising in this age group too. Children are prepared well for their work in Year 1.
- Governors display a high level of commitment to the school. They support and challenge its leaders in equal measure. They know the school extremely well.
- Parents are very pleased with the school and what it does for their children. They speak highly of the staff and of the support they receive to help their children learn.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Their attendance is good, as is their behaviour. They are keen to learn and to help and care for each other.
- Provision for pupils' personal development, welfare and well-being is outstanding. It is underpinned by the school's values and threaded throughout the well-planned curriculum; consequently, pupils develop a range of important skills for later life.
- Pupils describe the school as a happy place, where everyone is treated equally and where, 'if someone hasn't got a smile, you give them one of yours.'
- Pupils feel safe in school. They speak with clarity and confidence about how the school teaches them to keep themselves safe, including online.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are sometimes unsure of where they have gone wrong or what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers' feedback does not always help them in this.
- Subject leaders have not established how teachers should assess pupils' achievement in some subjects.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help pupils to make even faster progress by:
 - sharpening the feedback they receive, so that they are always clear about what they need to do to improve
 - checking that pupils understand where they went wrong
 - developing assessment procedures in those subjects that do not yet have them, so that pupils' progress can be better tracked in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is highly respected by governors, parents, pupils and staff. Together with the deputy headteacher and other leaders, he has set high expectations and created a unity of purpose that gives the school strong capacity for further improvement. The large number of staff who expressed a view were unanimous in saying that the school is better than at the previous inspection. Staff morale is high.
- Robust systems for managing the performance of staff bring together a range of ways in which the school keeps its effectiveness under constant review. Teachers are held strongly to account for how well their pupils are doing, not least at pupil progress meetings, where they have to answer for any dip in pupils' progress and show what they are doing about it to get the pupils' learning back on track.
- The challenging targets set for staff, and ultimately pupils, arise from the well-considered priorities in the school's development plan, which are drawn up following accurate self-evaluation. Because everyone is involved in the processes in some way, they understand how what they are doing fits into the bigger picture and helps the school to improve.
- Senior and subject leaders check the quality of pupils' learning by observing it at first-hand in class and by analysing the work in pupils' books. Subject leaders give a good account of themselves. They know what is going on in their subjects because they are given time to make the necessary checks.
- Leaders of English, mathematics and science have a good understanding of what assessment information tells them and they use it well to plan further improvement. Leaders of other subjects have identified the skills pupils need to acquire in their subjects, but have not yet established how to measure progress in them. A programme is under way to develop secure assessment procedures in each subject in turn.
- All subjects are included within a well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum that is responsive to the needs of the pupils, and constantly adjusted to meet them. Reading, writing and mathematical learning is included in different subjects, as are opportunities for pupils to use computers and learn about computer programming. Due regard is given to science and to modern foreign languages.
- Visits, visitors, different approaches to teaching and opportunities to undertake research and find things out for themselves, all bring learning to life for the pupils. The large number of extra-curricular activities covering sports and arts add to pupils' enjoyment of school and provide opportunities for them to learn much more but in a less formal way.
- All learning is consistent with the school's core values, which incorporate British values and underpin all work. Following the 'five Ws' (Witness, Welcome, Worship, Wisdom and Welfare), pupils learn to reflect on their learning and behaviour, and to care for others and the world in which they live.
- The words 'tolerance' and 'acceptance' were used several times in conversations with pupils, showing how well the school prepares pupils for life in the democratic, culturally diverse British society in which they live. Pupils also learn why it is important to avoid extremist views, and to recognise when others might be trying to impose on them views or actions that they know to be wrong. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- The wide-ranging use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils (the pupil premium) has ensured that disadvantaged pupils do at least as well as other pupils. Leaders check carefully that additional help, such as individual or small-group teaching, really is making a difference.
- The effective use of the additional sports funding has led to a much greater range of sports and exercise activities for pupils at lunchtimes and after school. Leaders report a big increase in the numbers of pupils participating in such activities, greater involvement in competitions with other schools, and improved expertise among the staff.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school well. Their regular attendance at meetings, events and a wide range of relevant training reflects their commitment and dedication.
 - Governors keep a strategic view of the school's longer term journey and they are passionate about improvement. They know how well pupils are doing and how well the school is performing. They use their considerable range of expertise effectively to ask pertinent questions about why things are as they are and how they can be made even better, at times suggesting ways forward.
 - Governors receive comprehensive information about how well staff are doing. They add to what they are told by visiting the school and talking to staff and pupils. They support the headteacher well in making decisions about staffing and staff pay.

- The arrangements for safeguarding, including child protection, are effective. Procedures for checking and recording the suitability of adults who work with children are all in place. The school is especially vigilant in helping pupils, and where relevant, their families, to overcome issues that might affect learning.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Bright, vibrant and well-organised classrooms set the tone for the effective learning that goes on within them. Displays strike a good balance between celebrating pupils' work and effort, and giving pupils something more to think about to take their learning further. Pupils report that they enjoy their lessons, learning is fun and teachers are helpful and supportive.
- Staff are very aware of the different groups of pupils they teach. They usually pitch learning accurately, thereby ensuring that all pupils, from the least to the most able, disadvantaged or not, make good progress.
- Teachers demonstrate their good subject knowledge in well-targeted questioning that probes and extends pupils' thinking. They are mostly skilled at building on pupils' responses, although occasionally, some staff too readily accept one-word answers.
- Well-briefed teaching assistants give pupils good support with their learning and behaviour. In lessons, they help those who are least able and those with special educational needs or disability to take a full part in whole-class sessions. They then work with different ability groups at different times to support their learning, as does each teacher.
- Reading, including phonics, is taught well, as are writing and mathematics. Teachers encourage pupils to use their literacy and, where appropriate, their numeracy skills in different subjects. They are skilled at using subjects such as history, geography and science to provide a context within which pupils can write, for example, chronological and non-chronological reports, diaries and formal and informal letters.
- Science is also taught well. The emphasis on practical, investigate work is encouraging pupils to think logically and scientifically. This approach is also benefiting pupils' learning in mathematics, as teachers encourage them to think and reason mathematically as they investigate and solve problems.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning accurately in English, mathematics and science. In lessons, they readily adjust learning in response to how quickly or not pupils are grasping a particular learning point. Between lessons, they use the information well in their planning as they work out how to fill any gaps they have noticed in pupils' learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. By marking writing skills, wherever they occur, they keep reminding pupils that it is important to write well at all times. In accordance with the school's agreed marking policy, they provide pupils with written feedback on their learning, as well as discussing it with them in lessons.
- Some written feedback leaves pupils confused as to what they need to do to improve or does not lead to improvement. This usually happens when the comments do not link precisely enough to what pupils were expected to learn in a particular lesson, or pupils do not respond properly to them by making corrections to show that they understand where they went wrong.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils can approach staff, including the headteacher, with confidence, knowing they will be listened to and helped. They trust their teachers implicitly, saying, for example, that 'teachers can keep secrets if you want to keep things private.'
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Parents report that their children often want holidays to end so that they can be back at school. All staff, including the headteacher, know the pupils and their families really well. They treat each pupil as a unique individual and go the extra mile to support them.
- Pupils report that they feel very safe at school. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in and out of school, and of the dangers associated with using the internet, mobile phones or social media sites. They understand what bullying is, in all its forms. They report that it is extremely rare and that, if it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.

- Well-attended breakfast and after-school clubs provide pupils with a wide range of activities that enable them to start and end their day well. Activities such as 'friendship week' and anti-bullying projects reinforce the importance of getting along well with others, regardless of background or ability.
- Pupils care deeply for others. Through the chaplaincy team, they undertake charity work, for example, running a Macmillan coffee morning, selling poppies and representing the school on Remembrance Day. They are proud of the badges, which they designed themselves to reflect their roles, and which they describe as 'always here to help' and 'to reach out a hand of friendship to anyone feeling lonely.'
- Pupils are tolerant and accepting of others. They welcome new people, regardless of background or culture and know that everyone should be treated equally well. They have a strong sense of justice and fair play. They welcome the strong links that leaders have established with a school that has a much greater ethnic mix, enabling them to gain insight into backgrounds and cultures that differ from those in their own school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are very polite, welcoming and friendly. Confident in themselves, they reach out to and help others. Their attitudes to school and to learning are good.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners who want to do well. The vast quantity of work they have produced this year shows just how much they have learned. The standard of presentation is good and pupils are justifiably proud of their achievements.
- In lessons, pupils work industriously, concentrating on their learning and, where relevant, helping each other. They very much enjoy the opportunities they have to talk to each other and clarify their thoughts before answering a question or putting pen to paper. Pupils usually behave sensibly at these times, ensuring that they learn from each other.
- The vast majority of pupils respond quickly to instructions, showing a good degree of self-discipline as they do so. A few pupils sometimes require additional reminders before they do as they are asked, usually because they have become over-excited and less likely to listen carefully.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of what is right and what is not. They understand that actions have consequences and appreciate that rules are necessary to keep the school and society running smoothly. They take responsibility well, for example as school councillors, prefects and play leaders, and want to make a difference to their school.
- Pupils acknowledge that some pupils have what they call 'anger issues' and can retaliate in the wrong way. However, they are very confident that staff quickly sort out any such issues. The few pupils with specific behavioural needs are supported really well so that their needs do not overly interfere with their learning or that of other pupils.
- Behaviour is also good in the playground. Pupils have plenty of equipment to play with and on, and they use it all sensibly and safely.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Different groups of pupils, from the least to the most able, make good progress across the school. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs or disability.
- Children start school with underdeveloped language, communication and mathematical skills. By the time they leave, they have caught up with other pupils nationally. This puts them on an equal footing with others as they start secondary school.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen steadily in the past three years in Year 2 and Year 6, and the results of the phonics screening check for pupils in Year 1 have also improved. Work in pupils' books and on display shows a range of good learning in other subjects too. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well in all of them.
- Pupils read widely, understand what they read and use what they learn to improve their writing. They speak proudly of the golden stickers that show their reading has improved and they can move on to harder texts or begin to choose their own books. The headteacher hears every pupil in Years 3 to 6 read, further reinforcing for them the importance of reading well.
- Pupils rise to the challenges that staff present to them to improve their writing. As a result, they find, for example, more interesting vocabulary to engage the reader or persuade them to agree with their point of view, or encourage them to consider the pros and cons within a balanced argument.

- Pupils are excited about writing because they understand that it has a purpose and enables them to communicate with others in different ways. Their handwriting is neat and legible and they pay good attention to grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Improvements in mathematics mean that pupils are beginning to think and reason mathematically, calculate more rapidly and deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. They work hard to use precise mathematical vocabulary to explain their thinking and they thoroughly enjoy the practical work that shows them that mathematics is important in everyday life. These things were particularly evident as Year 6 pupils investigated which shapes would or would not tessellate, and as pupils in Year 5 estimated how much water a container might hold before carrying out a practical investigation to check their answers.
- Pupils are beginning to apply the same logical thinking to their work in science as they predict outcomes, undertake investigations and record their findings, all of which they do well. The quantity of good-quality work pupils have done in science this year is impressive. Pupils also gain an early insight into different languages as they learn French in Years 3 and 4 and Spanish in Years 5 and 6.
- The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils is steadily reducing. The good progress these pupils are now making is helping them to catch up with their classmates.
- The most able pupils make good progress, with some reaching higher levels than their starting points might initially suggest. Improvements in teaching mean that these pupils are identified sooner and given harder work to do. They rise to the additional challenges set.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability also make good progress. Strong leadership of the provision for these pupils and the generous deployment of skilled teaching assistants mean that they make good gains in their learning and personal development.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is well led and managed. Teaching is good and children are prepared well for their work in Year 1. Having started school with language, communication and mathematical skills that are below those typical for their age, they make good progress in early reading, writing and number work. The proportion reaching a good level of development has improved and is now close to the national average.
- Adults regularly reinforce children's phonics skills, for example by asking children to identify the initial sounds of different words, as well as the sounds produced by different combinations of letters. This was noted when children were having fun finding rhyming words and recognised that 'bed' and 'head' rhymed, although the spellings were different.
- As they decided where to put Rosie the hen, the children also showed that they enjoyed learning to write and were beginning to write in sentences using capital letters and full stops. Letter formation is not yet entirely secure, but children are using their phonics skills well to help them spell.
- Children show good ability to count one by one and to record their number work, albeit still with some reversal of numerals. The most able children proudly showed how well they could count in fives.
- Staff have high expectations of what the children can achieve. They plan exciting activities for them, modify the activities to suit the children's different levels of ability, and mostly interact well to ensure that learning takes place. They quickly pick up on how well the children are doing and, through questions and suggestions, they support learning or take it further.
- Children's progress is assessed, tracked and recorded carefully and specific initiatives are introduced, where necessary, to meet the needs of individual children. Teaching assistants are involved in planning, and they support children's learning well.
- Children settle quickly, cooperate well with each other and willingly share the resources available to them. They listen carefully to what they are asked to do and respond quickly to instructions. The environment in which they work and play is calm and purposeful indoors and out, although staff do not make as much use of the outdoor area as they might to promote learning and personal development.
- Excellent attention is paid to children's health, safety, welfare and well-being. Staff have formed exceptionally strong links with the 10 pre-school settings from which the children come. This means that issues that might affect children's learning are identified prior to their starting school and additional support can be planned to begin straight away.

- Parents who spoke to inspectors were very happy about how well their children settle and the good progress they make. Links between home and school are strong.

School details

Unique reference number	119666
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10012130

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Beardsworth
Headteacher	Gerard Keane
Telephone number	01254 701616
Website	www.stedwardsrcdarwen.co.uk
Email address	office@stedwards.blackburn.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 March 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for disadvantaged pupils) is average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Children in the early years attend full time. All pupils are taught in single-age classes.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in a range of lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher. They also analysed the work in the books of pupils currently in the school, as well as the school's most recent information about pupils' progress.
- Inspectors listened to pupils in Year 1 read, and sampled sessions where staff were teaching phonics (the sounds that letters represent). They also spoke to older pupils about reading.
- Discussions were held with key leaders, eight governors and a representative of the local authority to gain their views of the school.
- The inspectors spoke with different groups of pupils, formally and informally, and took account of results of the school's recent 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.
- Inspectors gained the views of a number of parents at first-hand as they brought their children to school. They also took account of the views of the 56 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector spoke to staff and took account of the views of the 16 members of staff who completed Ofsted's questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lorna Rushton

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

