

# St Antony's RC Primary School

Shadsworth Road, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 2HP

## Inspection dates

2–3 April 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The focused and effective leadership of the headteacher and new senior leadership team has led to considerable improvements across the school since the previous inspection.
- Good teaching is ensuring that improvements are sustainable. Over time, most pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make good progress.
- The progress that pupils made in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was comparable to the best progress made by all pupils nationally.
- Children settle well into the early years. Adults provide stimulating activities that engage and interest the children. However, the outdoor learning environment does not fully promote all areas of children's learning.
- Due to a concerted effort by the school, attendance has significantly improved since the previous inspection and is now broadly in line with the national average. Fewer pupils are now persistently absent from school.
- Safeguarding pupils is at the heart of everything that the school does. The support given to vulnerable families is second to none.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum that enthuses pupils' passion for learning. However, the leadership of subjects in the wider curriculum is not as well embedded as that of English and mathematics.
- Senior leaders keep a close eye on the quality of teaching to make sure that it is of a high standard. However, the feedback given to staff after observations of their teaching does not consistently focus sharply enough on the learning that has taken place for different groups of pupils.
- The use of high-quality questioning across the school is inconsistent, as are opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and share their ideas.
- Governors are ambitious for the school. They have been instrumental in working with senior leaders to bring about improvements.
- Delightful, friendly and well-behaved pupils are a credit to the school and their families.
- Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of the school's work. They typically commented, 'This is an amazing school with a real family atmosphere.'

## Full report

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

- Ensure that the recent improvements to pupils' outcomes across the school are sustained and that the quality of teaching continues to improve by:
  - ensuring that staff use questioning that consistently develops and extends pupils' learning
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to share their thoughts and ideas so that they become even more engaged in their learning.
- Develop further the leadership and management of the school by:
  - ensuring that feedback given to staff after observations of their teaching focuses more sharply on the learning for different groups of pupils
  - embedding the roles of middle leaders in the wider curriculum so that they have a more detailed overview of the quality of teaching in their area of responsibility.
- Develop the outdoor provision in the early years so that it is of the same high standard as that available to children indoors.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- This is an improving school, despite a period of recent significant instability. Under the guidance of the headteacher and new senior leadership team, the school has gone from strength to strength.
- Poor teaching has been eradicated. Virtually all staff are new to post since the last inspection. The impact of senior leaders' work is reflected in improving outcomes for pupils across the school.
- The staffing team has now stabilised. The few staff that were in post at the last inspection commented positively about the significant improvements made by senior leaders. Staff are now a close and tight-knit team.
- The headteacher is the captain of her ship. She is crystal clear about what the school does well and the further improvements that are needed.
- Senior leaders keep a watchful eye on the quality of teaching. They hold teachers fully to account for the progress that pupils make. However, the feedback given to staff after observations of their teaching does, at times, not place enough emphasis on the learning for different groups of pupils.
- Staff access a wide variety of training opportunities to keep their teaching skills fresh and up to date. They have also had opportunities to observe good practice in school and at other schools in the local area. Staff work well with colleagues in local Catholic schools to support each other with training and moderation.
- Leaders of English and mathematics have a firm grasp of their subjects. As a result of recent initiatives that have been implemented, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics are improving. For example, a new approach has been introduced for the teaching of phonics at key stage 1, which staff have embraced. A stronger emphasis has been put on developing pupils' vocabulary and spelling skills to enhance the quality of their writing. In addition, all pupils now complete four mathematics activities at the start of the school day. This has improved attainment in mathematics. This is affectionately known as '4-a-day'. The leaders of both English and mathematics monitor closely the progress that pupils make. They also monitor the quality of teaching in their area of responsibility.
- Leaders have crafted a curriculum which pupils find exciting, challenging and fun. Subjects are taught discretely. Pupils' learning is enhanced further by numerous exciting trips, visitors to the school, after-school clubs and special events.
- Middle leaders of subjects in the wider curriculum monitor their areas of responsibility closely, including the knowledge and skills that children acquire as they move through the school. However, middle leaders do not have structured procedures in place to monitor the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- The pupil premium funding has been spent wisely. The headteacher has an excellent understanding of the barriers to learning that this group of pupils face. The money is carefully apportioned to support pupils academically, socially and emotionally. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are able to take part in all that the school has to

offer, and they achieve well.

- The physical education (PE) and sport premium has also been used to good effect to promote health and fitness across the school. It has funded support from specialist coaches. They have worked with teachers to help them to deliver high-quality PE lessons. Some of the money has also been used to fund additional sports clubs and inter-school competitions, which pupils clearly enjoy.
- Additional funding for pupils with SEND is spent well to ensure that their needs are met effectively. The impact of the high-quality additional support given to these pupils is closely checked for its effectiveness. The school also works well in partnership with outside agencies. This helps to ensure that the diverse needs of pupils with SEND are met in a sharing and inclusive environment.
- British values are well promoted and threaded into all aspects of the school's work. Through the curriculum, pupils are developing an awareness of gender-based issues, same-sex families, different faiths and cultures and the rule of law. Leaders and staff have made pupils aware of the importance of tolerance and respect for their peers, adults and others beyond the school community. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Parents are effusive in their support for the school. They are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents appreciate the wide range of workshops provided to help them to develop their children's learning at home.
- Transition arrangements to high school are effective. Close links are forged between Year 6 and Year 7 teachers. They share relevant information to ensure pupils' successful transition into secondary school.

### **Governance of the school**

- There is no question about governors' dedication to the school or their desire to further improve outcomes for all pupils.
- Governors bring a varied range of skills to their roles. They have a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve.
- Governors are aware of the progress that different groups of pupils in the school are making.
- Governors are very supportive of the headteacher and are not afraid to make difficult decisions with regard to underperformance.
- Governors meet their statutory duties with regard to safeguarding. They also keep a close eye on the school's budget to ensure that the school remains sustainable.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is given a high profile around the school.
- Staff have a good awareness of the indicators of abuse and neglect and the procedures to follow, should they be concerned about a child's welfare.

- Staff have a good understanding of the child protection risks that apply locally.
- There are comprehensive procedures in place for the recruitment and selection procedures for new staff.
- At the time of the inspection, the single central record was compliant and met current government guidelines.
- The school site is secure. Visitors' credentials are verified before they are allowed to enter the school building.
- All documentation examined during the inspection with regard to safeguarding was fit for purpose and stored securely.

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

**Good**

- As a result of effective leadership, the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Poor teaching no longer exists in the school. The quality of teaching over time is good. This is in line with the school's self-evaluation.
- Many teachers display good subject knowledge across the curriculum. They encourage pupils to be resourceful, resilient and reflective. This contributes to the good progress that pupils make.
- Teachers know their pupils well – their likes, dislikes and capabilities. Activities are well planned to meet pupils' differing abilities.
- Some staff make good use of questioning to develop and extend pupils' learning. This was exemplified when staff made effective use of questioning to assess pupils' understanding of 'snappy sentences' and how they were using this knowledge to develop and extend their current piece of writing. However, such effective practice is not consistent across the school.
- Inspectors observed some staff giving pupils the opportunity to work together, share their ideas and extend their learning. Pupils enjoyed these opportunities and were animated and engaged. However, as with the use of high-quality questioning, this effective practice is inconsistent across the school.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and a valuable asset to the school. They work well alongside the teachers to develop pupils' learning.
- Pupils are becoming keen historians and geographers. Older pupils are becoming adept at using their historical knowledge when writing newspaper articles. In geography, they are developing a deep and rich understanding of the different climatic zones. Younger pupils were engrossed as they looked for similarities and differences in contrasting localities. Through their research, they discovered that Antarctica is a land that is almost all covered in ice and it never rains because it is too cold. They also found out that Antarctica is a continent all by itself, without any other countries in it.
- Working with a resident artist provides numerous opportunities for pupils to explore and enhance their creativity using a wide variety of media.

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

**Good**

## **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Exceptional levels of care, guidance and support are offered to those facing challenging and difficult situations. Working very closely with the family support worker, no stone is left unturned to ensure that the needs of vulnerable families and children are fully met in a timely manner.
- Visitors to the school are made to feel very welcome. They cannot fail to be impressed by the warm, friendly and caring ethos of the school. This enables many pupils to grow in confidence, become independent learners and make wise decisions about their own well-being and safety.
- Pupils value highly their education and are keen to do well in life. They aspire to become veterinary surgeons, pilots and marine biologists. Pupils clearly understand the need to access further education to achieve their ambitions. Visitors such as police officers, magistrates, gas fitters and plumbers come into school and sit on the 'Throne of Words' to talk to pupils about their roles in society and answer their questions.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. This is reflected in improving rates of attendance and the reducing numbers that are persistently absent from school.
- Pupils really do have a voice in the school, both as subject ambassadors and as elected members of the school council. School councillors were instrumental in introducing class pets. They told the inspector that the decision to introduce class pets was taken to 'lighten children's moods and help them concentrate and feel better about themselves'.
- Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe when online. They recognise the dangers of disclosing personal details and passwords. Assemblies are regularly devoted to raising pupils' awareness of online safety, both at school and at home.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different forms of bullying and the distress it can cause. Older pupils told inspectors that incidents of bullying are rare and, if they do occur, they are dealt with swiftly by staff. Examination of electronic records confirms that this is the case.
- Pupils' health and physical well-being is of paramount importance. Healthy eating is actively promoted, and pupils take part in a 'mile a day' run. The school also runs a 'Live Well Week' which promotes many aspects of pupils' physical, emotional and mental well-being.

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. All pupils get on well together, irrespective of their race, gender or culture.
- Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They look smart in their school uniform, which they wear with pride.

- Overall, standards of behaviour in class are good. On occasions, when pupils become uninterested in their learning, they become fidgety and restless.
- There is a consistent approach across the school to behaviour management. Pupils' efforts are constantly celebrated. This helps to promote their confidence and self-esteem.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- The progress and attainment that pupils made by the end of Year 6 in 2018 are remarkable. This is particularly so when taking into consideration that the school was judged to require improvement at its last two section 5 inspections.
- The progress that pupils made in reading and mathematics was significantly above the national averages and in the highest 20% in the country. The progress that pupils made in writing, although not quite as strong, was still above the national average. For middle-ability pupils, their progress in writing was significantly above the national average.
- The picture at the end of key stage 1 in 2018 was not quite as rosy. Although pupils achieved well in the phonics screening check in relation to their starting points, attainment at the end of key stage 1 dipped. However, there were specific and justifiable reasons for this. Additional support has been given to these pupils in Year 3. Inspection evidence shows that they are catching up quickly.
- Work in current pupils' books shows that many pupils across the school are making good progress in writing and mathematics in both key stages 1 and 2. Pupils are set work that challenges them to think deeply and do their best.
- A love of reading permeates the school. Reading areas are available in all classrooms. Pupils make good use of the well-stocked school library to enhance their knowledge and literacy skills. Younger pupils who read with inspectors did so with fluency and expression. They were able to predict what might happen next in the story, and they could summarise the plot in their own words.
- Current pupils make strong gains in subjects such as science, history and geography. Pupils are acquiring deep knowledge and skills in all of these subjects. Teachers ensure that pupils have the opportunities to write at length across subjects in the wider curriculum. Senior leaders have taken the decision to limit the use of worksheets with small boxes. This ensures that pupils are able to write at length, particularly those who are the most able.
- Staff are particularly proud of the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. The progress that these pupils made in reading at the end of key stage 2 in 2018 was comparable with the best in the country when compared to the progress of other pupils nationally. This is due to the effective use of the pupil premium funding and the higher expectations of staff.
- Taking into consideration their very diverse needs, pupils with SEND make good progress. This is due to high-quality teaching, timely interventions and the effective use of the SEND funding.
- Pupils who have a limited knowledge of English are provided with additional support

from bilingual staff. They become absorbed in developing their vocabulary and make the same good progress as their peers.

- Parents are in full agreement that their children make good progress while at St Antony's. This view is endorsed by the local authority.
- Pupils leave the school as well-rounded youngsters who are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children come into the early years with varying levels of skills and abilities. Their communication, physical and literacy skills are particularly poor. Most children make good progress. Over time, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is increasing.
- The leadership of early years is good. The early years leader knows what is done well in the Nursery and Reception classes and what needs to improve. Any underperformance is addressed quickly. For example, new initiatives which have been put in place to improve children's physical and literacy skills are beginning to have a positive impact.
- Children's individual development is captured in detail in learning records. These clearly highlight the good progress that current children are making.
- The learning environment indoors is well laid out and covers all areas of children's learning. There are clearly defined independent areas which are well resourced. These provide children with challenging activities to develop and extend their learning. Many of the resources are natural, which provides children with real-life experiences. For example, an extensive range of fruit and vegetables were made available for children to make pictures, reflecting the work of the artist Giuseppe Arcimboldo. However, the outdoor learning area is not of the same high standard.
- The quality of teaching is good. Language skills are well promoted and there is a real buzz of conversation as children learn and play. A varied range of exciting opportunities are available for children to develop their reading, writing, scientific and mathematical skills.
- Staff are calm, kind and caring. Children are happy, confident and busy. They feel safe and squabbles are rare.
- Positive relationships have been established with parents. They take an active part in their children's learning. Transition arrangements into the early years are tailored to suit the needs of individual children. Consequently, children settle quickly into their new environment.
- At the time of the inspection, there were no breaches to the statutory welfare requirements.

## School details

Unique reference number	119516
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10057929

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Gerard Barry
Headteacher	Mrs Heather McGowan
Telephone number	01254 546 86
Website	<a href="http://www.stantonysrc.co.uk">www.stantonysrc.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@stantonysrc.co.uk">admin@stantonysrc.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	28–29 September 2016

## 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 from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is above the national average.
- A section 48 inspection was carried out in February 2017.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been a significant number of staff changes at all levels across the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Several sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils and members of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- The lead inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils from Year 2 read. Inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work in books and on display.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, the school's own information on pupils' starting points and outcomes, and reports on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors took account of the school's own questionnaire to parents. Inspectors also took into consideration the 17 free-text responses from parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. Due regard was also taken of the 11 responses from staff to Ofsted's online questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Maggie Parker

Ofsted Inspector

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