

# St Michael and St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Clitheroe

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119644
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	339489
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 June 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Shirley Herring

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

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<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>	205
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Martin Nolan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Vincent Murray
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2007
<b>School address</b>	Lowergate Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 1AG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed eight teachers in 14 lessons and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and governors. They observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' plans, pupils' work, assessments and tracking of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan, school policies, photographs of school events. Inspectors analysed 108 completed questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress pupils are making in mathematics in Key Stage 2, particularly girls
- the consistency of teaching between subjects
- the planning for different areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

The vast majority of pupils in this broadly average sized primary school are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who are known to be entitled to a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Retirements have resulted in several changes in staffing since the last inspection. The before- and after-school club on site was not part of this inspection.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?****2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. Inspectors agree with one parent who described it as '...a caring and happy school which promotes both personal development and academic achievement'. It has outstanding strengths in high attainment and achievement, pupils' attendance, their contribution to the community and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The effectiveness of the school's links with partners and the involvement of parents and carers are exemplary and the school gives excellent value for money.

Pupils enter school with a range of skills that overall are above what is typical for their age. They make good progress and attain high standards by the time they leave. Attainment has been consistently above average in Key Stage 1 for several years. Though overall attainment in Key Stage 2 is high, in the recent past it has been higher in English than in mathematics. This is due in part to the successful focus on improving writing. In mathematics lessons, initial activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for different abilities and marking does not give sufficient guidance as to how pupils can improve. However, new systems for tracking pupils' progress and the setting of ambitious targets have resulted in a very good improvement in the recently received results for the current Year 6 and the gap between subjects is much smaller. There is no noticeable difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

Parents and staff value the role the headteacher plays in engendering a strong community spirit and a caring ethos which promote pupils' personal development well. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and is being used well to bring about improvements. Writing was an area for improvement in the last inspection, but is now a strength and standards are very high. This exceptional improvement has been brought about by concerted and effective actions, such as the development of speaking and listening skills and the use of drama to stimulate creativity.

The accurate evaluation of its work, sustaining above average standards in Key Stage 1 and improvements in attainment in Key Stage 2 indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

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

- Accelerate progress further in mathematics through Key Stage 2, by:
  - embedding the new systems for tracking pupils' progress to identify any slowing of progress at an earlier stage
  - providing more consistency in marking to help pupils to improve

- using assessment information more systematically to plan activities at the start of lessons to challenge all abilities.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

Pupils say they enjoy school, including the good range of additional activities on offer. When given the opportunity they rise to a challenge as when trying to find all the lines of symmetry by folding different shapes. Even when the pace of a lesson slows they stay on task and try to do their best. Behaviour is good and this makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. They put up their hands, are confident to offer ideas and listen well to each other.

Children enter the school with a range of skills that overall are above what is typical for their age. They make good progress and overall attain high standards by the time they leave school. Over the past three years, attainment in English has been higher than in mathematics. However, the very recent unvalidated results for pupils currently in Year 6 show a good improvement in mathematics to narrow the gap considerably. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support and make good progress.

Pupils say they feel safe because adults in school take good care of them. They are confident that there is an adult to talk to if they have a problem. They understand the value of exercise and a healthy diet and many enjoy growing vegetables in the school garden which are then included in school lunches. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community through their many responsibilities, such as school and eco councillors. They join in many projects to improve the local community such as joining in with a project with the local community officer to pick up litter. They participated in the local community transport project and the work of two pupils is incorporated in the sign by the railway station to welcome visitors to the town. They are well prepared for the future as their attendance is excellent, their literacy and numeracy skills are high and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are sound. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Children have a deep understanding of their own Catholic faith and treat each other with respect and kindness. They develop a very good understanding of other world faiths as they visit diverse places of worship such as the synagogue and the mosque and welcomed followers of the Buddhist faith into school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Lessons have clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils so they focus on their learning. Explanations are clear so pupils understand what to do and get on quickly. Teachers take account of assessments of pupils' understanding to plan work for different groups in the main activity. However, in some mathematics lessons, all pupils have the same initial activity, which can last almost half the lesson. In some cases more able pupils finish quickly and have to wait for others to finish, which they do patiently and with good grace. In many other lessons pupils are fully involved through discussions with their talking partners or by the teacher catching their imagination, for example, in a dramatic introduction about a pirate ship which inspired pupils' writing. Teachers carefully mark pupils' work and there are some good examples of suggestions to help pupils to improve, though this is not yet consistent through the school. Pupils say that teachers also help them to improve through discussion about their work.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of pupils well. The good emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills is raising standards. Varied opportunities to write extensively in English lessons and other subjects have improved successfully pupils' work. Initiatives to improve mathematics, such as greater use of the Interactive White Board, a week devoted to mathematics and participation of more able pupils in the National Mathematical Challenge have helped to raise standards. Information and communication technology is taught well in lessons in the ICT suite, but the use of computers in other lessons is limited. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is strong and this makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. The curriculum is enhanced by well established links with partners, such

as the local theatre and the high school.

Inspectors agree with the vast majority of parents and carers who say that this is a caring school which supports pupils well. Good procedures welcome pupils when they start school and also prepare them well for the high school. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss any concerns and so look forward to the next stage in learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including the most vulnerable, are identified at an early stage and receive good support to help them make good progress in their learning. The good systems of positive reinforcement have promoted good attitudes and behaviour well.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The senior management team have a clear ambition to raise standards even higher. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and has been used effectively to improve and then sustain high standards in English. The school has been slower to address the gap between standards in English and mathematics over the recent past. New systems for tracking pupils' progress have been introduced and these are now having a good impact on standards in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2, which have risen significantly this year. However, their use is not yet fully embedded to check all pupils are making as much progress as possible throughout the key stage.

Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and needs of the school. They are a regular and welcome presence in school and provide good support. The governors are vigilant in reviewing the premises and site to ensure pupils' safety. All systems for safeguarding pupils are in place and staff are fully trained. The school is proactive in collaborating with key agencies to protect the most vulnerable. Leaders and governors are fully committed to equal opportunities and racism would not be tolerated.

Information is analysed carefully and the school is now able to identify more promptly those pupils seen not to be making enough progress.

The school has excellent links with parents and carers who say they feel very welcome in school and well informed. They appreciate the regular newsletters and sharing information about subjects such as, mathematics in parents' meetings. The school takes parents and carers' views into account, for example, in providing facilities for a before- and after-school club on site. The school has strong links with partners in the parish and wider community. The involvement in the Parish Forum has resulted in good support

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

from parishioners to help pupils in the very active Gardening Club. The strong links with the local cluster of schools has improved opportunities in sports, quizzes and in joint choral performances. The well established links with the high school is a great source of specialist help, for example, in modern foreign languages.

Community cohesion is good. The school is involved with many projects in the community and hosts many events. There are very good links with other faiths to help pupils to develop an understanding of other beliefs and cultures. Pupils are aware of the needs of others as they join in community fund raising such as 'Make Poverty History.' The school has developed links with a school in France and participates in an international mathematics competition with schools from across the world, enabling pupils to develop a global perspective. The school is currently reviewing its policy on this aspect of its work.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the school with a range of skills that vary from year to year, but overall are above what is typical for their age, though there is a comparative weakness in their knowledge of letter sounds. They make good progress in the Reception class and most achieve and some exceed what could be expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The introduction of a daily phonics session, which is matched well to children's needs, has helped children to make particularly good progress in this aspect.

Teachers plan a good range of purposeful, practical activities that show a good understanding of how young children learn. All of the required areas of learning receive



attention. They work creatively to make the most of the small outdoor area for learning and children move very carefully so as not to bump into anyone. Children enjoy solving problems and speak with energy when describing which way up they should have their hand to hold more objects. There are good assessment procedures to check children's progress and the results are used well to provide more support or greater challenge for individuals. Children make a good contribution to the community as they put up their hands and take turns.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. There are good systems for introducing children to school, including visiting all children in their pre-school settings. Children visit the school in the summer before they start and learn to settle quickly as older brothers and sisters come to visit them. Parents and carers say they like the homework sheets which give a good idea about themes so that they can reinforce what is being learned. All systems are in place for safeguarding children and staff are fully trained.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## **Views of parents and carers**

Over half of parents and carers completed a questionnaire. Inspectors agree with the vast majority of those who returned a questionnaire who say that children enjoy school, they are well cared for, that teaching is good and the school is well managed.

Inspectors do not agree with the small number of parents and carers who say that the school does not take their suggestions and concerns into account.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael and St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Clitheroe to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	77	23	21	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	81	20	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	63	58	41	38	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	63	38	35	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	71	30	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	64	38	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	81	75	26	24	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	77	71	28	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	61	39	36	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	74	69	31	29	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	69	64	34	31	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	91	84	17	16	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	83	77	24	22	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



1 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael and St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Clitheroe,  
Clitheroe, BB7 1AG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you all. We really enjoyed the salad vegetables you had grown in the school garden.

We agree with you and your parents and carers that St. Michael and St. John's is a good school, in fact some things about it are outstanding. Your achievement in school is excellent and you attain higher standards than is usual for your age by the time you leave school, particularly in English. You play your part by behaving well and having excellent attendance. We were impressed by your contribution to the school and your local community. Children in the Reception class have an interesting time and learn well as do the pupils in Key Stage 1. The school takes good care of you all and there is always someone there to give you extra help if you need it.

To make your good school even better the adults are going to help you make more progress in mathematics through Key Stage 2 by:

- using the new systems to track your progress and offer support when it is needed
- providing you with more information about how to improve your work
- making sure that the oral and mental starters to your mathematics' lessons challenge you all.

Best wishes, I hope you continue to enjoy learning so much.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead Inspector

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