

# St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Longsight Road, Osbaldeston, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 7HX

**Inspection dates** 10 January 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school is a very welcoming place to be. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to their excellent behaviour and safety.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make a good start to their school life. Across the school, pupils achieve well. Their progress is better than expected; standards are above average by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs get very good support. This enables them to be fully included in all aspects of school life. They proceed at a good rate towards their individual targets.
- The quality of teaching is good with significant strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and aspects of mathematics and reading. Lessons are fun and promote excellent attitudes.
- The progress of pupils is regularly checked and well-judged support is given if a pupil risks falling behind.
- The school offers pupils a range of lively topics for study. Sport, music and drama activities are available. Educational visits, for example, to local theatres, widen pupils' understanding of the world.
- Parents are closely involved in the day-to-day life of the school. They work in close partnership with it to support their children's learning.
- The headteacher and staff are dedicated to constantly improving the school. Staff are well managed and trained to ensure that they are up to date with current educational thinking.
- The governing body plays a strong role in driving forward many key aspects of the school's work. Its members contribute to the school's good capacity to improve in future.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards in writing at Year 6 are below those gained in mathematics and reading.
- Pupils have low levels of awareness of their own performances and how to raise their standard of work in writing.
- Marking does not consistently guide pupils towards how they can improve their written work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed five lessons.
- Meetings were conducted with a group of pupils, three governors, senior leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Evaluations of a range of school documentation added to the inspection judgements. These included the documents relating to safeguarding, the improvement plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and records of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The inspectors took account of the parents' views through discussions at the school door as they arrived in the morning and by evaluating the 34 responses to the school's annual questionnaire. A check was also made of any responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) but, at the time of the inspection, none was registered.
- An evaluation was undertaken of the views of staff as expressed in 10 questionnaires.

## Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Maloney

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Raise achievement in writing by:
  - removing the variations in marking so that all pupils receive clear guidance about how to improve
  - enabling pupils to develop a good understanding of their own performance and what they need to do to move from one level of attainment to the next
  - refining the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to write in different subjects, applying high standards in all cases
  - rigorously evaluating the quality of teaching of writing across the school and its impact on learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children enter the school with the skills just above typical for their age. They make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their understanding of letters and sounds is secure. As they move into Year 1, their reading, social and communication skills are relatively strong. Children's investigations indoors and out enhance their understanding of the world around them.
- Attainment is above national average by the end of Year 2, reflecting continuing good progress. The current Year 2 pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Year 6, attainment has been improving. It is above average overall. Standards are well-above average in reading and above average in mathematics. In writing, standards are in-line with the national average.
- The rate of progress throughout all years is good. Between Years 2 and 6, it exceeds national expectations. School data indicate that the good progress in writing at Key Stage 1 is feeding into rising standards in writing across Key Stage 2. Initiatives to adapt the curriculum to inspire pupils to write, for example by its 'pirate week', are having a positive impact although there is still more to do.
- Pupils read confidently and fluently. The whole school promotes a love of reading, and regular home-school reading activities reflect strong partnerships with homes in promoting this core skill.
- Well-judged initiatives in mathematics have made lessons fun and improved standards. Pupils say they love mathematics because strategies such as using songs and games bring learning alive. They respond very well to good expectations to use their good basic mathematical knowledge to solve mathematical problems.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers and support staff know these pupils' learning needs well, and plan timely interventions. This leads to their total inclusion in school life and good progress towards their personal targets.
- The few pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding have support when required if they are at risk of falling behind.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils comment on the way activities are taught well and bring new skills and knowledge alive. They describe lessons as, 'fun and very interesting'.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, teaching is particularly effective and has some outstanding elements. Strong teamwork between the class teacher and teaching assistant provides work very carefully matched to each pupil's needs. Skilful teaching of letters and sounds gives pupils the confidence to read and write.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, for example in aspects of mathematics. In such lessons, pupils are engrossed in their learning and the teachers demonstrate highly skilled, probing questioning, expecting pupils to achieve as well as they can and to think for themselves.
- In writing, expectations are not always high enough to match the advanced speaking and reading skills of many pupils. Opportunities are relatively narrow for pupils to write in a wide variety of subjects at a sufficiently high level.
- The school's systems for tracking pupils' progress are efficient and effective. In most lessons, teachers take careful account of what pupils already know and understand. Teachers value the pupils' ideas and opinions. Generally, this promotes good learning although, in writing, not enough time is devoted to pupils applying and developing their skills fully.
- Teachers' marking is up to date and regular. At its best, for example in Key Stage 1, staff and pupils enter into dialogue about how to improve. This is not, however, consistently the case. At times, marking does not point out clearly enough to pupils their next steps for improvement. Many pupils are not as aware as they should be of how well they are learning in writing, in

particular, and what they need to target to move on; for example, from Level 4 to Level 5.

- Excellent social skills and relationships exist in lessons. Opportunities for pupils to talk and debate are a feature of many lessons and a variety of collaborative activities is a strong feature of the school's practice.
- Teachers and teaching assistants offer good levels of care, support and guidance to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They are included in everything that goes on in lessons and school life.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Parents rate the school's levels of care and safety very highly. They applaud what they describe as the 'family atmosphere'. Inspection findings confirm their views. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils are bursting with enthusiasm to learn. At all times pupils are safe and very well cared for.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside at play is exemplary. They listen attentively to staff and to one another and are extremely patient with their classmates including those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils have a well-developed sense of citizenship. They are proud of their role as school councillors working with staff to improve aspects of the school. Much energy is put into raising funds for others less fortunate than they are.
- Break and lunchtimes are very orderly. Pupils play safely in their exceptionally well-equipped playground, which includes extensive play and climbing equipment. Throughout the day, pupils care for each other. Older ones are proud to be a 'buddy' of younger ones and give support whenever requested.
- Pupils have a deep understanding of the different forms of bullying and say that any forms are virtually unknown. The school's incident records reflect a calm and harmonious learning environment.
- Above average attendance and excellent punctuality reflect in the pupils' high levels of enjoyment of school.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has skilfully built a strong and dedicated staff team. Together they ensure that pupils grow into confident young citizens with good academic and personal skills. Equality of opportunity has a high priority and all pupils have equal access to all the school offers.
- The school judges its performance accurately. Its plans for improvement focus on sustaining and improving pupils' achievement. There has been great success in doing this in mathematics and strategies are currently underway to improve writing. Leaders have yet to evaluate rigorously enough the quality of teaching in writing and its impact on pupils' achievement.
- Appropriate professional development, linked to the annual reviews of staff performance, strengthens staff expertise. Staff work purposefully with other professionals locally to ensure best practice is shared across small schools. This has had a particular impact on ensuring the accuracy of assessment of pupils' standards.
- The curriculum provides stimulating, practical experiences for pupils. It meets the needs of the mixed-age classes. The progression in the acquisition of new skills and knowledge as pupils move through the school is mapped carefully. Imaginatively, flexibly planned topics inspire and motivate pupils. Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about 'Creative Friday'. This enables them to experience a variety of activities beyond standard lessons, including drama.
- Pupils benefit from good opportunities for developing skills of music and dance, for example, samba, developing a knowledge of French and participating in inter-school sports events. Pupils have gained great success in singing and regularly perform in events at Blackburn Cathedral and other local venues.
- The school works very well with parents. The headteacher ensures effective communication

exists between homes and school and encourages the parents' partnership in their child's education.

- The school benefits from timely support from the local authority. It contributes to the school's evaluation of how well it performs and the strategies required for improvement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a detailed understanding of the strengths and points for development of the school, from the classroom to wider environmental issues. They are very aware of the school's performance data and its implications for the quality of teaching. When available, governors keep up to date by attending training. Statutory duties are carried out diligently; safeguarding procedures meet requirements and keep pupils and adults safe at all times. The governing body ensures that there is efficient deployment of staff and resources and are aware of their role in checking on how well pupil premium funding is spent. Targets set for the headteacher and staff are challenging and effective in driving improvement and teachers' pay is linked to the effectiveness of teaching.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119647
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403404

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	77
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Nugent
<b>Headteacher</b>	Judith Metcalfe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 December 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 812543
<b>Fax number</b>	01254 812543
<b>Email address</b>	head@smrc.lancs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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 Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, 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.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)  
[Store St](#)  
[Manchester](#)  
[M1 2WD](#)

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

© Crown copyright 2012

