

St John CofE Primary School, Kearsley

Church Road, Kearsley, Bolton, BL4 8AP

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start to their education. They mostly start school with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in number work, language and communication, and make good progress.
- Pupils achieve well across the school and some groups achieve exceptionally well. Attainment in the Year 1 reading check in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) was above average in 2012. Pupils usually leave school with at least average and sometimes above average standards of attainment.
- Pupils are well behaved in their lessons and generally behave well in the playground. They are confident and caring towards their peers and younger children. They know how to keep themselves and others safe and how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of all the different abilities. Teaching assistants give very effective support, sometimes in the classroom and sometimes with small groups who receive extra practice at essential skills.
- The curriculum is good; pupils find it interesting and are particularly proud of their reading progress and their beautiful artwork. The curriculum provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors provide strong leadership and have a clear vision for further improvement which is shared by staff. This has led to better teaching and achievement, and has set the school on an upward, successful path.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching, although good overall, does not yet enable all pupils to make outstanding progress.
- The behaviour of some pupils needs further improvement to become outstanding.
- Outdoor learning is not exciting enough for the youngest pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons taught by seven teachers and one teaching assistant. One of the lessons was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a few short visits to observe pupils' learning and to hear some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and managers, staff, members of the governing body, a local authority representative and groups of pupils.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own information about pupils' progress, planning and monitoring of teaching, safeguarding information and the minutes of governors' meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 25 responses to the online survey (Parent View), comments from a parent by telephone and also the 11 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Barbara Flitcroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a slightly smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is higher than the national average. (This is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action is lower than in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who are learning English as an additional language, is below that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The deputy headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection and there have been some other new staff joining the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching so that more pupils make better than expected progress by:
 - extending the excitement, innovative planning ideas and inspirational teaching strategies seen in the best lessons, throughout the school
 - further develop the highly effective questioning techniques which are emerging in some classes.
- Raise expectations of behaviour even higher, especially of pupils outside the classroom environment, to eradicate low-level disruptions in the hall and corridors and play which can be too boisterous.
- Make full and creative use of the outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, giving them more opportunities to initiate their own outdoor learning and exploration.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception class with levels of knowledge and understanding below the levels expected typically for their age. Some children are well below these expectations, especially in early reading, writing and mathematics skills. Despite a lack of exciting outdoor provision, they make good progress so that the gap between their levels and those typically found nationally has narrowed.
- The school's results in the 2012 Year 1 reading check were above average. Standards at the end of Year 2 are consistently broadly average, which represents good progress from pupils' starting points.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above average in English for the last three years and in mathematics for two out of the last three years. A dip in mathematics attainment in 2012 was caused by a few pupils just missing their targets. This year's Year 6 pupils are well on track to achieve high standards in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are very well supported. Consequently, they make outstanding progress. Those pupils who are eligible for pupil premium currently attain higher than their peers in mathematics and slightly lower than their peers in reading and writing. All groups of pupils make at least expected progress and a high proportion of these exceed expectations.
- Girls perform slightly better than boys. The school has recognised this and purchased new reading books, introduced writing opportunities across the whole curriculum and encouraged purposeful mathematics problem solving.
- Daily phonics sessions, which are targeted to the pupils' abilities, enable them to make good headway with their reading and spelling. The very clear teaching of writing and mathematics helps pupils to develop their skills well and make progress at a good pace.
- There has been a whole-school drive to improve pupils' love of reading. The impact of this has been a significant increase in the number of pupils who read at home regularly, due to parents supporting the school's work. This has resulted in pupils who love to read and discuss different authors. Pupils speak proudly of their progress in reading and the increase in their 'reading ages'.

The quality of teaching is good

- Overall, teaching is good; some lessons are outstanding. Pupils make very good progress.
- Good teaching, with effective teaching assistant support across the school, engages pupils in a wide range of well-planned activities.
- The best lessons have excitement and pupils concentrate, develop their vocabulary through discussion, develop ideas and learn how to present their work appropriately.
- Lessons are well planned; there are high expectations of the pupils, who understand what they are learning and why. Pupils are knowledgeable about what they need to do to improve their work further. Questions are used skilfully by some staff to probe understanding and extend learning.
- Pupils love the thematic approach of the creative curriculum. They were extremely proud of their urns in ancient Greek style and their artwork. They were excited about writing to pupils in Ethiopia and were keen to show the letters they had written and those they had received.
- Work in books and displays around the school show that pupils are given many opportunities to read and write for an audience or use their mathematics skills with real purpose.
- There is a good quantity of work in pupils' books which is consistently well marked to praise achievement and advise on the next steps in learning. Pupils respond well to the marking comments in their books. Time is given in lessons for pupils to read teachers' marking comments

then make corrections and improvements to their work.

- Teachers and teaching assistants work well in partnership to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils find the work challenging but achievable. While the quality of support is very good, pupils are also given ample opportunities to work independently. Importantly, pupils of all abilities have equal opportunities to respond to questions in class or group discussions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Teachers manage pupils well, and establish strong and positive relationships with children when they start in Reception. This supports children's attitudes to school and learning. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning in lessons. In all classes, much talk-partner work is done to prepare pupils for their tasks in lessons. The school calls this Rally Robin and it works very well.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good in lessons and generally good around the school, but there are occasional incidents of low-level disruption in the corridors, hall or playground. Pupils' behaviour is usually managed well by teachers and support staff.
- Pupils of different ages work well together and care for each other. Some older pupils are play leaders and encourage younger pupils to play well together. At the end of infant break, the Year 2 pupils pair up with a partner from Reception to walk into the school building together; older pupils provide a good role model.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school, and this is supported by the views of most parents and carers. Pupils say there is no significant bullying and they are confident that, if any did occur, they could trust the staff to deal well with it. Pupils are knowledgeable about different types of bullying, especially regarding new technology. Pupils are confident to share their worries with staff because they trust them.
- The school makes sure that pupils know how to keep themselves safe and prepares them well for the future. All Key Stage 2 pupils learn how to swim at the local pool. Pupils are taught about road, railway and water safety.
- Most pupils arrive on time at the beginning of the school day, eager to learn. They have positive attitudes to learning that are reflected in the improving attendance figures, now in line with the national average. The school actively works with parents of pupils who attend less well and some of these have improved their attendance and punctuality as a result.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has given exceptional leadership to establish vision and clear direction. Improvements have been made through highly effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's practices. This has identified the school's strengths and areas for development. These have been tackled by strategic planning, which is very well supported by governors, who also challenge senior leaders over pertinent issues.
- Teaching is carefully monitored by senior staff and subject leaders. Useful feedback focuses on specific improvements to raise the quality of teaching.
- Teachers' targets are based on their performance and the progress made by the pupils they teach. Pay progression is linked to successful performance. Training is linked to the needs of teachers and to the school's comprehensive development plan.
- The carefully planned curriculum brings together subjects that excite pupils and strongly promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are opportunities for pupils to learn about and celebrate their own and other cultures. They visit church regularly and also visit other places of worship. Pupils raise money for charities and have a good knowledge of right and wrong.

- Pupils have good access to books in classrooms and in the attractive school library. They are enthusiastic readers who read with a variety of adults around school. Many pupils have opportunities to further their reading skills at home with parents and carers, who have responded to the call to support the work of the school. Each class has a text from which some of their work is planned. Year 1 pupils were delighted to write a story about Mr Magnolia's boot and keen to tell the inspectors about Quentin Blake, the author.
 - The school ensures that pupils of all backgrounds and abilities feel valued: it has a strong ethos of inclusion and equality. It carefully identifies pupils who have particular learning needs and offers support for these pupils to learn alongside their peers. The headteacher, who is the acting coordinator for pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, has worked tirelessly to obtain the necessary assessments, identification and support for these pupils. As a result of this and the excellent support they receive, their progress is outstanding.
 - Safeguarding systems are robust and meet all requirements. These are reviewed regularly by senior leaders and the governing body.
 - The school is well supported by the local authority, which has full confidence in the senior leaders and governors to continue this upward and successful drive for improvement. This school has much to be proud of. It has had a very successful journey since coming out of special measures at the previous inspection in March 2011.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has a good understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement gained through regular visits, meetings with senior leaders and observations of lessons. Governors have the skills and confidence to hold the leaders to account. They know how the school compares with others and take a full part in its improvement. They ensure safeguarding requirements are met and are closely involved in the evaluation of teachers' performance and its impact on their pay. They know what is being done to reward good teaching and tackle any underperformance. Training for the governing body is comprehensive and matched well to the needs of this school. Governors have a good awareness of the school's budget. For example, they know how the pupil premium is spent, why it is allocated in this way and the impact it has on pupils' academic and personal development. They also have a good knowledge about the way the devolved formula capital money has contributed to building projects and the purchase of technological equipment.
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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

Unique reference number	105241
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	400048

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bob Atkinson
Headteacher	Sally Magill
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2011
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