

# St Michael and St John's RC Primary School, Clitheroe

Lowergate, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1AG

**Inspection dates** 21–22 April 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- This is a very welcoming school which has an excellent standing in the community and strong links with parents and the local church.
- The headteacher, senior leadership team, staff and governors have worked tirelessly to ensure that all areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed.
- Together with experienced, supportive and challenging governors, the headteacher and senior leaders have raised standards across the school and improved the quality of teaching.
- Pupils, including children in the early years, benefit from a generally effective and fully engaging curriculum, which develops their appreciation and curiosity about local history, the natural world, the arts and science.
- Pupils' attendance is high and their behaviour is good. Pupils know how to stay safe. They enjoy finding out new things and relish the many opportunities they have to assume responsibilities, for example, as chaplains.
- The quality of teaching, including in the early years, is good. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils exceptionally well, and plan activities which they find interesting and challenging.
- Phonics is taught well. The proportion of pupils secure in the national phonics screening check (knowledge of letters and the sound they represent) in 2014 was well above average.
- Pupils' overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above average in 2014, and has been so for four of the last five years.
- At the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2014 pupils' attainment in writing was well above average.
- Most pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Parents are very appreciative of the opportunity to engage in their children's learning, and are of the opinion that their children are happy, safe, and cared for well.
- Early years provision for children in the Reception class is good. Well-qualified and caring staff ensure that children enjoy learning, make good progress and attain well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The best practice in teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation is yet to be fully shared across the school.
- The role of teachers responsible for leading subjects other than English and mathematics in improving pupils' achievement is yet to be fully developed.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching for small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Two lessons were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered 41 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the school's own surveys of parents' views.
- Responses to a questionnaire completed by 22 members of staff were considered.
- Meetings were held with seven governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders, and staff responsible for English, mathematics, provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and children in the early years.
- A meeting took place with two representatives from the local authority. A meeting took place with a parent.
- A range of documents were examined. These included various records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, development plans, the school's reviews of its own performance, information about pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

## Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila O'Keeffe

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium funding, is well below the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number are from minority ethnic groups, and a small, but increasing number, speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the early years provision attend a Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A number of appointments have been made since the previous inspection, including a new headteacher, two teachers and two teaching assistants. Two new governors have been appointed.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is outstanding and in so doing raise pupils' achievement further in Key Stage 2 by ensuring that the best practice in teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation is shared across the school.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that teachers responsible for leading subjects other than English and mathematics play a fuller role in improving standards.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders, together with the full support of staff, have been relentless in their pursuit of excellence. They have systematically addressed all areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. With the support of governors, leaders have clearly identified school improvement priorities which have resulted in good quality teaching and pupils' good achievement and behaviour. Inspection evidence, including school data, discussions with staff and pupils and work in pupils' books, indicates that the school's overall effectiveness is improving rapidly.
- Coordinators for English and mathematics are well trained and highly effective in their work. They regularly observe teaching and check on the quality of marking and analyse data on pupils' performance. Their good advice and support for teachers have helped to ensure pupils' rapid progress in mathematics this year, and helped to improve pupils' skills in spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, teachers responsible for leading subjects other than English and mathematics are yet to play a full role in improving pupils' achievement.
- Effective systems are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching. These show the good training and support received by teachers is helping continually to improve their practice. Teachers are set challenging targets which are closely linked to areas for improvement identified in the school's improvement plans, and to any areas of weakness identified from pupils' performance in national tests.
- The school has a small number of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium. However, their performance is closely checked and governors and senior leaders ensure that they fully participate in all aspects of school life. In 2014, their achievement at the end of Key Stage 1 was outstanding and good across the rest of the school.
- The school is well on its way to implementing its highly engaging curriculum. The curriculum is fully effective in developing pupils' skills in Key Stage 1. In 2014, it was not quite as effective in Key Stage 2, especially in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are caring, reflective, respectful and considerate. Pupils learn about the major world faiths including Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam and visit various places of worship. They enjoy exploring local places of interest, including the local church, the Cenotaph, and Clitheroe Castle, engaging in artistic activities, such as singing and playing string and percussion instruments, and visiting museums and theatres.
- Pupils have a well-developed understanding of British values and are aware of the culturally diverse nature of British society. They understand the importance of fair play, trust and the rule of law, and are exceptionally well organised when planning various charitable activities.
- Senior leaders and governors ensure the primary school sports funding is extremely well spent. Professional coaches help to develop teachers' skills in teaching sports such as basketball. Additional before- and after-school activities, including dodge ball, dance and martial arts, help to develop pupils' health and well-being. Funding also supports pupils' greater participation in local and regional competitions in sports such as gymnastics.
- The school's work to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination is highly effective. Inspection evidence shows that the school's excellent support and high expectations of pupils who speak English as an additional language ensure that they soon acquire the necessary skills to enable them to access all areas of the curriculum, and make outstanding progress.
- The school fosters exceptionally good relations with parents, the local church and the community. Parents are very complimentary about the work of the school. They are appreciative of the opportunities they have to participate directly in their children's learning, and through the 'parents, teachers and friends association'.
- The local authority has supported the school well with its work to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Most recently, it has worked with governors to develop further their skills in data analysis, and worked with senior leaders to monitor the quality of teaching.
- The school takes care to ensure that it has very effective arrangements in place for safeguarding its pupils, and children in the early years. All members of staff are fully conversant with their responsibilities for keeping children safe and know exactly what to do should they have any concerns over pupils' welfare or safety.
- **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school well. They are fully aware of how far it has come since the previous inspection, and know exactly what it needs to do to improve further. Governors are adept at challenging senior leaders and staff, particularly with reference to data on pupils' performance, and are highly supportive.
- Governors are skilled and experienced. They regularly come into school to talk to pupils about their various professions, observe teaching, look at pupils' work, and talk to them about their learning. Their active participation in the life of the school, as well as the regular reports they receive from senior leaders, gives them an accurate view of the quality of teaching, which they have helped to improve since the previous inspection.
- Governors know that the various action plans that the school has in place to raise levels of achievement, and the training that teachers have received, are effective, and have helped to raise standards. They are prepared to reward teachers for their work, but only if they are satisfied they have met their targets.
- Governors know that support through the pupil premium is making a difference for disadvantaged pupils. They know that well targeted and highly effective one-to-one and small group teaching activities are continually improving the standards attained by eligible pupils.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils, including children in the early years, are of the opinion that behaviour is good most of the time. Governors, parents and staff are of this view. Inspection evidence, including an examination of the school's behaviour logs, confirms that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, as evidenced by their good punctuality and their above average attendance. Many are prepared to come to school early to study, revise, or check and respond to teachers' comments on their work.
- Pupils behave sensibly at all times. This includes when moving around the school, and during play and lunch times. Pupils are courteous and considerate and always ensure that no one is left without a friend.
- Pupils are very considerate, caring and respectful towards each other and their teachers. They are well aware of the importance of the school's '5Ws' of 'welfare, witness, word, worship and welcome'. They act in accordance with these principles, particularly when recognising people less fortunate than themselves, and when conducting themselves within school and the wider community.
- Pupils enjoy having responsibilities, such as pupil chaplains; they listen to their peers and consider how they can help them. As 'gardeners' in Year 4 they partner and befriend 'seeds' in the Reception class. Pupils also enjoy 'having a say', which they do as members of the school council, and through their fund-raising activities. Pupils were immensely proud to talk to inspectors about the 'purple' fund-raising day that they organised to raise awareness, and funding, for epilepsy charities.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- The school's systems and practice to ensure that pupils, including children in the early years, are safe at all times are highly effective. The many visitors from the police, ambulance, fire, children's and social services help pupils develop a good understanding of dangers and risks, and ensure that they have a well developed awareness of safe and unsafe situations.
- Pupils know exactly what bullying is, and say that it is very rare 'because we are all close and look after each other'. They are confident that they can report any concern or worry to any member of staff, and know that such matters will be dealt with immediately.
- Older pupils are fully aware that bullying can take many forms, and regularly deliver assemblies on topics such as cyber bullying during anti-bullying week.
- Pupils are aware of most forms of discrimination-based bullying. They know, for example, that racism is when 'someone makes fun of someone else because of how they look, their skin colour, or what they believe in', and say that this is wrong, and never tolerated in school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe when on the internet, and when using electronic devices such as hand-held games and mobile phones. They know never to give out personal information

to people they do not know and always to talk to an adult if they are unsure about the safety of a website. Pupils understand the importance of road safety, and know how to stay safe when cycling and using roads and walkways.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained and have benefited from a wide range of professional development opportunities which have helped to ensure that the quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils, and plan activities which ensure that they find learning interesting, engaging and challenging. This was the case in a mathematics class in upper Key Stage 2 where groups of pupils tackled different activities which varied in difficulty. The most able pupils could order a range of mixed fractions and decimals in relation to their value, while others played a battleships game and used decimal numbers to work out coordinates through a process of elimination. All pupils were able to check their calculations by converting decimals into fractions, and vice versa.
- The quality of teachers' marking, including in the early years, is good. Teachers take care to indicate to pupils how they can improve their work, and regularly check to see that they have taken notice of their advice, and improved their work as a result of it. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that they found their teachers' comments, and the time given to improve their work, very useful. Work in pupils' books shows that this clear and consistent marking is helping to ensure that they make good progress over time in English and mathematics.
- Teachers expect high standards of behaviour in class, and pupils know listening and working hard are 'non-negotiable'. However, in all classes there is a 'hum' of excitement and anticipation, and pupils are exceptionally confident in coming to the front of the class to share their ideas with their class-mates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from good support, and working alongside their peers. As with all pupils, they are challenged in their learning, make good progress and attain well. This was exemplified in a Key Stage 1 class where pupils were writing about a Gruffalo. Pupils demonstrated great creativity as they used their 'sentence-openers', 'connectives pyramids' and 'Gruffalo maps' to support them in their writing. Teachers encouraged pupils to use similes and interesting words in their descriptions which helped them to write sentences such as 'The Gruffalo has eyes like fire, a poisonous green wart on his nose, and thorns along his back.'
- Pupils listen to each other's views and work exceptionally well together to solve problems. This was the case in an upper Key Stage 2 mathematics class, where pupils were given the freedom to choose which activities to work on, some being more difficult than others. Almost all pupils decided to challenge themselves and went for the hardest activities. These involved plotting a series of positive and negative two- and three-digit numbers in ascending and descending order. The teacher and teaching assistant closely checked pupils' progress and provided support when necessary. At the end of the session all pupils indicated that they had enjoyed and fully understood what they had learned.
- Staff take every available opportunity to encourage pupils, and children in the early years, to read from the wide selection of books available in the libraries in Key Stages 1 and 2, and in the Reception class. This helps to develop pupils' excellent expression when reading, their love of books, and their good progress.
- Teachers' work to develop and improve pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling is paying off. Evidence of this is seen in pupils' 'long writing' books. It is also seen in teachers' work in lower Key Stage 2, for example, to improve pupils' writing through making sure that they fully understand and appreciate the structure of the English language. However, occasionally spelling mistakes and grammatical errors are not picked up in pupils' written work and the best teaching practice in this area is yet to be fully shared across the school.

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- In 2014 at the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling was broadly average, and above average in reading and writing. Their progress in reading was broadly average, above average in writing, and below average in mathematics. Pupils' achievement in 2013 was better, and was above average in all subjects. Notwithstanding, pupils' achievement has improved in all

subjects across the school since the previous inspection.

- Inspection evidence, including school data and work in pupils' books, shows that currently Year 6 pupils are attaining well above expected standards for their age, which is at least in line with the performance of Year 6 pupils in 2012–2013. Pupils' overall attainment has been well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 for four of the last five years, including in 2014.
- Phonics is taught well. The proportion of pupils identified as secure in their phonic skills in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2014 was well above average. Pupils read well and often, and are familiar with the work of a range of authors. Older pupils are very supportive of their younger class-mates and regularly listen to them read. Those who read for inspectors were eager to discuss their books, and were highly skilled at assessing the quality of their peers' reading.
- Pupils' progress in writing was at least good in all year groups in 2014, and has improved further this year. Pupils have many opportunities to practise their writing skills across all subjects. They are reflective, imaginative and thoughtful in their writing. They enjoy empathising with the views of others, and recounting their many educational visits.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6 in 2014 was not as good as in reading or writing, and their attainment at Level 5 was average. The school's own data show that these pupils made good progress in Year 6, but did not quite make up for lost learning from previous years, or achieve as well as they should have. Pupils' progress in mathematics was good in all year groups in 2014, and is continuing on an upward path this year.
- In 2014, there were very few pupils from minority ethnic groups, or with English as an additional language at the end of Key Stage 2. However, this is changing in the early years and across Key Stages 1 and 2. The progress of all pupils is regularly checked and the school's own data show that pupils from these groups make exceptionally good progress, often with little or no English on entry to the school, and are soon integrated into school life.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well cared for by highly skilled staff. Their progress, often from very low starting points, is good in all year groups. There were too few pupils in these groups to make any meaningful comparison between their performance and that of pupils nationally at the end of Key Stage 2. However, the attainment of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs at the end of Key Stage 1 was broadly similar to that of all pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in mathematics at the end of Year 6 was just ahead of their peers in school, about half a term behind in reading, and less than half a term behind in writing. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment was about a term ahead of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in mathematics, broadly the same in reading, and just ahead in writing. All disadvantaged pupils made at least expected progress in reading and writing, which is better than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally though their progress in mathematics was not as good. The school's own data show that currently these pupils are making at least good progress in all subjects across the school.
- The school's work with the most able pupils is exemplary, as shown in the quality of their work, and their attitude to learning. Teachers have the highest possible expectations of these pupils and consistently set them challenging work. Pupils' excellent writing, avid reading and willingness to do extra work are all helping to ensure that the school's challenging targets will be met. In addition to this, several pupils routinely engage in the high Level 6 work in mathematics.

## Early years provision

**is good**

- The leadership and management of all aspects of the early years provision are good. Early years staff work exceptionally well with parents, the church and members of the local community to ensure children's educational experience is memorable, their progress is good, and they attain well.
- Children start the Reception Year with different skills in various areas of learning. For example, some enter with skills in reading, writing and number recognition below those typically expected for their age, and some, including the increasing number of children with English as an additional language, require specialist support. However, all children benefit from good teaching, with experienced, caring and well-qualified staff, and soon settle into the Reception class and make good progress in all areas of learning. In 2014, the proportion of children entering Year 1 with the skills and abilities necessary for the next stage of their learning was just above average.
- Teaching is good in all subjects. Whenever possible staff develop children's skills by linking them to

practical activities. This was evident when children demonstrated their good skills in using investigation and play to identify shapes, and order various objects in relation to their length and height.

- Children follow routines closely, behave exceptionally well, and play and learn together safely. This includes when they learn outside the school and engage in gardening activities during 'Welly Wednesday', when taking turns playing on their bicycles, and when engaging in various activities in their outdoor learning and play areas.
- Provision in the Reception class is good. Children learn in bright and imaginative classrooms with displays of their work linked to various topics, including spring and farm animals. Information on counting, writing and reading is available to develop children's skills in these areas. Reminders of the school's values on, for example, the 'Friendship Tree' and in the 'I can sit nicely' and 'I can be polite' displays indicate how children are expected to behave. Outdoor provision is limited; nevertheless, staff use this to full effect, and as regularly as possible, for growing seeds, role play, construction, water-play and painting.
- Children benefit from a highly effective curriculum, which stimulates their curiosity and helps them to develop a sense of wonder. This was exemplified when twin lambs were brought into class and inspired children to write sentences such as 'I love the farm, please don't feed the animals.'
- Staff continually check children's progress and regularly share 'wow moments' and information on their development with parents who support in assessing their child's progress at home.
- The Reception staff have gained regional recognition for their excellent work with parents, who regularly get involved in their children's learning through gardening, phonics, mathematics and homework projects. Parents appreciate this involvement and are happy that their children are safe, secure, and looked after well.



## 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>	119644
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	462331

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Martin Nolan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zoe Mabbott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 May 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	01200 422560
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