

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Scarisbrick

Hall Road, Scarisbrick, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L40 9QE

**Inspection dates** 13–14 February 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Children start the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. They leave school with standards in reading, writing and mathematics above the national average, representing good progress.
- Teaching is good. Teachers explain well what the pupils should learn at the beginning of the lesson. As a result, pupils know what to focus on. Support staff use their initiative and provide a good level of guidance for all pupils including those with disabilities and special educational needs, which enables all groups of pupils to make good progress.
- Pupils feel safe and behave well. They speak highly of their teachers and enjoy school. There have been no exclusions.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school. The quality of teaching is regularly monitored and areas for improvement are identified, to ensure that teaching is of good quality.
- Governors bring a good range of relevant expertise to the school. They understand all aspects of the school well. There is good capacity for both school leaders and governors to take the school forward.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Introductions to lessons do not always meet the needs of more-able pupils.
- Not all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed four lessons and visited various classrooms for shorter periods of time.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, senior leaders, and teachers with responsibilities for leading subject areas, as well as with the Early Years Foundation Stage leaders. Meetings were also held with governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Results from 32 on-line questionnaires (Parent View), were taken into consideration in planning the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including: the school's data showing pupils' current progress; documents relating to the school's own view of its performance; the school improvement plan; records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Pritiben Patel, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a small school in comparison to other primary schools.
- Most pupils are of White British background. A very small number are from mixed heritages.
- Both the percentage of pupils supported at school action and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. Pupils' needs relate mainly to physical disabilities and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below average. This is funding given to schools by the government to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals; children of armed forces personnel; or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age groups throughout the school, apart from the Reception class.
- A breakfast-club is run on the school site and managed by another provider. The school provides an after-school club for pupils overseen by the governing body.
- A new headteacher has been in post since the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding and hence accelerate progress even further by:
  - ensuring that introductions to lessons meet the needs of more-able pupils
  - ensuring that all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start the Reception class with skills that are typical for four-year-olds. Due to strong teaching they make good progress and enter Year 1 just above the levels expected for their age. In 2012 boys did not achieve as well as girls in communication, language and literacy. As a result, the curriculum has been adapted and there are greater opportunities for boys to write outdoors and engage in more practical activities such as building words using alphabet blocks and making words using play dough. This is having a positive impact on the achievement of boys which is now improving.
- More pupils than nationally seen attained the expected levels in the Year 1 phonics test which is an assessment of the sounds that letters make.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average overall and by the time pupils leave in Year 6 standards are well above average, demonstrating that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. In 2012, national test information was stronger in English in comparison to mathematics. The school's careful analysis shows that there was no weakness in mathematics teaching, but that the small number of pupils in the class skewed the data.
- The numbers of pupils making expected and more than expected progress compare very favourably in relation to the national picture.
- The progress that pupils make is regularly tracked in reading, writing and mathematics so that anyone falling behind can be quickly identified and supported so they catch up. As a result, all groups of pupils including those who are entitled to pupil premium, those known to be eligible for free school meals and the small numbers of pupils from mixed heritage backgrounds, attain the same standards as those of their peers.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs achieve in line with their peers because their progress too, is tracked regularly and 'Super Targets' are set for them based on either improving their achievement or personal development. These targets are shared and reviewed with both pupils and their parents so that everybody is clear about the progress being made.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and parents agree. Relationships between staff and pupils are strong, and as a result, pupils learn in a supportive environment. Teachers are enthusiastic and this has a positive impact on pupils' motivation as they want to learn.
- Lessons have a fast pace so that pupils are engaged and interested. Staff ask questions that require a considered reply so that pupils' learning can be improved and tested. For example, in Key Stage 1 numeracy lesson about capacity, the teacher asked, 'What measurement would I use to measure water in a bottle?' Pupils provided a variety of responses depending on their understanding.
- Teachers ensure that the curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils. For instance, 'Talking Tubs' are used in the Reception class so that children inform the teachers about what they are interested in. Teachers then plan activities around these areas.
- Support staff are of high quality and work well with pupils both in the classroom, as well as providing more individual support outside of the classroom.
- Pupils receive constructive homework on a regular basis which reinforces and extends learning effectively.
- The main activities in lessons meet the different abilities of pupils well. For example, in a Key Stage 2 literacy lesson pupils were identifying special aspects of newspaper articles. The more-able pupils were given more challenging articles to work with which met their needs. Also, in the Reception class during a lesson about the sounds that letters make, pupils were making words the teachers asked them to, using different materials. More-able pupils were asked to think of

their own words, providing the right level of challenge for them.

- However, introductions to lessons are not always as effective as they should be in meeting the needs of more-able pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 1 numeracy lesson pupils were learning about the concept of 'full' and 'empty' containers. However, the more-able pupils understood this already, and as a result, they were not being sufficiently challenged. This slowed the progress they made.
- Not all pupils are clear about what it is they need to do to improve their work. As a result, they are unsure about what they need to focus on next and this also slows their progress.

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

- Pupils speak very highly of their teachers and as one boy, exemplifying the views of many, said, 'There's always someone here for you'. Pupils enjoy school greatly and this is shown in their above average attendance. Pupils say that they are well looked after because in this school, as a member of the governing body explained, 'Every child really matters'.
- Pupils want to learn and do well. They behave well in the classroom as well as at break and lunchtimes. They greatly enjoy the opportunities they are given to work in pairs and groups in lessons. At times some pupils need a gentle reminder to listen, but when asked they respond very well. There have been no exclusions or racist incidents. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue and the occasional name-calling or teasing is dealt with quickly by staff. Pupils say that if they had any problems then they would speak to an adult in school. Some parents have expressed a concern about bullying. However, inspection evidence has not found this to be an issue.
- Pupils feel safe in school and their parents agree. Pupils have a good understanding about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they know about how to cross the road safely and what to do if a fire breaks out. They also know how to keep safe when using the Internet.
- Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and get along with one another well. They think about things carefully and some pupils choose to write prayers. They leave these in the prayer area if they want them to be shared. There are also good opportunities for pupils to think and reflect during assembly times.
- Pupils are proud of their school and take their responsibilities seriously. For example, the Eco-Council importantly explained how they have built a 'Hedgehog Hotel' so that hedgehogs can sleep there and be safe. The school council members have written rules for the playground and the Playground Buddies support younger pupils and provide friendship for anyone who is lonely.

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

- Parents, pupils, teachers and the governing body praise the leadership of the headteacher. He has set a clear direction for the school and has plans in place to ensure that it becomes even more successful. The self-evaluation of the school is accurate.
- Subject leaders, too, strive for continuous improvement. The numeracy and science leaders check teachers' planning and pupils' books to ensure that pupils make at least good progress. The literacy leader is new to post and is quickly getting to know her role.
- There have been good improvements since the last inspection. Standards in writing at the end of Years 2 and 6 have improved because pupils have greater opportunities to write at length, for example, through regular 'Extended Write' opportunities. The outdoor provision in the Reception class has greatly improved which is impacting well on pupils' good achievement.
- Teachers' performance is regularly checked and they are held to account for the progress that pupils in their classes make. Improvement areas are identified for them and professional

development is provided to meet their needs.

- The curriculum is based around key themes so that pupils learn skills and acquire knowledge in a useful and interesting way. A range of visits outside school such as to museums and woodland, linked carefully to pupils' current learning adds great enjoyment for them. Visitors to school also enhance the curriculum such as popular authors.
- Parents are kept well informed via weekly class and school newsletters which inform them about what their children are learning about, as well as other important school news.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides good support based on the needs of the school. For example, much support has been provided to improve the provision in the Reception class.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body are well trained. Members offer both support and challenge. Governors contribute to the school self-evaluation and monitor the school development plan to ensure that improvements are on track. Governors manage the performance of the headteacher well and understand pupil progress information. Governors know that pupil premium money is being used on additional support staff so that these pupils continue to achieve as well as their peers do. They ensure that the finances of the school are in good order.

## 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>	119683
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403409

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>	94
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mary Ormsby
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Nolan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 June 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 880626
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