

# St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Claughton-on-Brock

Smithy Lane, Claughton-on-Brock, Preston, PR3 0PN

## Inspection dates

9 November 2012

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- 'This school is like a family' say pupils, parents and staff. Excellent promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in the warm, caring ethos ensures that pupils develop mature, sensible and caring attitudes towards others and to their learning.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe, secure and happy, and are extremely proud of their school. They are unfailingly polite, friendly and helpful, participate in all activities with great enthusiasm and make a very strong contribution to school life. Attendance is above average.
- Very keen attitudes result in excellent achievement. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make at least good progress in English and mathematics, and many make significantly better than expected progress.
- Attainment is well above average. This results from a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the way learning is tailored very closely to pupils' individual needs and abilities as they move through the school.
- Outstanding teaching was seen in lessons that were well-planned with lots of challenge and activities directed very precisely to different abilities. Pupils' work is marked thoroughly, with useful comments to help them improve, but they do not always have opportunities to respond to these.
- Reading is taught very well, and attainment is well above average, supporting learning in all lessons. Pupils show great enthusiasm for reading, and read widely for pleasure and for research.
- The headteacher's dedicated and inspirational leadership underpins the strong teamwork between leaders, staff, governors and parents. Their shared vision for the school has seen improvements since the previous inspection, most notably in achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Parents' views were particularly positive, especially about pupils' learning, the quality of teaching and the way the school keeps their children safe.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out with half a day's notice.
- The inspector observed five lessons, visited small-group activities, observed pupils at play and lunchtime and attended the celebration assembly.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body, and the inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- A range of school documents was seen including: the school's own evaluation of its performance and the monitoring records of teaching and learning. Pupils' workbooks and progress records were scrutinised and safeguarding arrangements were checked.
- The 16 responses in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account.

## Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average size primary school and pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action or school action plus is below average and there are no pupils with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher is an associate advisor with the local authority, sharing her leadership skills and best practice with other schools.

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

- Enhance pupils' involvement with their learning even further by providing them with regular opportunities to respond to teachers' marking.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is outstanding

- Children start school with skills typical for their age, although for some, language skills are slightly weaker. Very skilled teaching ensures that children settle quickly and make rapid progress in all areas of learning. They enjoy investigating all activities and become increasingly confident and independent, deciding which activity to choose or dressing themselves in waterproof clothing ready to work outside.
- Good and often better progress continues as pupils move through the school. The proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in both English and mathematics is much higher than the national figure. Mixed-age classes ensure that pupils move between key stages seamlessly and learning proceeds smoothly.
- There is an upward trend in attainment over time at both the nationally expected level and at the higher level. School tracking shows that pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are on course to maintain this. Because numbers are very small, pupils can easily be grouped by ability rather than age, ensuring that they are all fully and appropriately challenged and extended. An example of this was seen when pupils from Years 5 and 6 tackled complex mathematical problems. Pupils respond well and mix very happily in all groups.
- There are no significant variations between the achievements of any pupil groups. High quality, well-targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium ensures that they progress at the same rapid rate as their classmates.
- The teaching of reading is a high priority, and attainment in reading is well above average. Consistently applied strategies ensure that pupils quickly gain the reading skills needed to support learning in all subjects and equip them well for the future. Younger pupils enjoy their daily letters and sounds practice and know how to tackle unknown words by 'breaking them up'. Many pupils say their families listen to them reading at home and many volunteers come into school to hear readers, including governors and members of the parish.
- Many opportunities, such as speaking in assembly, help pupils develop very good oral skills so they express and explain their ideas well. These skills enable pupils to use varied vocabulary to make their writing interesting and lively and they write confidently at length. Younger pupils use the recently introduced joined handwriting style.

### The quality of teaching

### is outstanding

- A typical pupil comment was 'Lessons are fun, but we have to work hard'. This was very clearly shown in an excellent mathematics lesson where Years 1 and 2 pupils were really excited when the teacher dressed as Red Riding Hood's grandma. Pupils respond well to staff's high expectations and as a result demonstrate outstanding achievement and behaviour. Excellent relationships between adults and pupils ensure that lessons proceed smoothly and no learning time is wasted. Pupils co-operate extremely well with each other, for example working with partners to research on the Internet.
- Staff question their pupils very skilfully, so they think hard and reflect on what they are learning, which makes a very strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Throughout the school, pupils concentrate well and work very hard on their tasks. For example, reception children listened very carefully to spot differences between two versions of the traditional tale, Red Riding Hood.
- Strong subject knowledge and thorough use of the school's informative assessment and tracking systems enable staff to group pupils of similar ability. They plan well-matched, precise tasks that stimulate and challenge them all, ensuring that every pupil achieves well and experiences success. This was observed in an outstanding lesson when older pupils tackled ratios for the first time.
- Work is marked thoroughly and older pupils in particular receive extensive, informative written

feedback about how to improve. Pupils know their targets and say marking is helpful, but are not always given time to respond and put their teacher's guidance into practice.

- Skilled teaching assistants contribute very effectively to all aspects of learning. They are trained and informed well, for example in the teaching of reading and mathematics, and provide knowledgeable additional support for pupils with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium.

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

- Pupils are always courteous, friendly, and keen to help. The school ethos is very happy, calm and harmonious, and pupils and staff show mutual respect, care and consideration. Excellent attitudes to learning were observed in all lessons, in small groups or when working with different staff, and pupils co-operate willingly with staff and their classmates.
- Behaviour is excellent in all situations. Pupils helped draw up the school's behaviour code and are keen to earn 'Golden Time' each week. Older pupils are very protective towards the younger ones and carry out responsibilities eagerly and sensibly, such as looking after equipment. They move round inside and out with consideration for their own and others' safety. Pupils are keen charity fund-raisers and spoke enthusiastically about helping a school in the Gambia, which extends their cultural awareness of others in the wider world community.
- Pupils, parents and staff agree that the school is a very safe place. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the Internet. They trust the staff, describing them as 'fair', and are sure that any problems are listened to and dealt with effectively and sensitively. Bullying is not seen as a problem, and pupils understand that bullying may take different forms, such as name-calling or cyber-bullying, and know how to deal with them.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive in good time each day. This supports learning well and is very good preparation for the future as reliable members of society.

### **The leadership and management** is outstanding

- The local authority provides light touch support for this outstanding school, and has used it as an example of good practice.
- School leaders and governors are highly ambitious and passionate about their school and are totally committed to ensuring on-going success. High quality, rigorous management and appraisal of teachers' performance are supported by well organised, strategically targeted professional development, often in partnership with local schools. Staff constantly refresh and extend their skills and expertise, so pupils' achievement is outstanding and there is a steady upward trend in attainment. Parents are extremely supportive and positive about all aspects of the school.
- The rich curriculum is organised very well, provides stimulating experiences across the whole range of subjects and makes full use of the extensive school grounds and rural surroundings. Pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well, and they mature as very well-behaved, caring, and hard-working individuals. The mini-bus is invaluable for visits to take learning well beyond the classroom, for example Jodrell Bank or the Auction market in Claughton-on-Brock.
- Pupils have extensive opportunities to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills in different contexts, for example researching and writing about oceans and continents and calculating which is the largest.
- Ensuring all pupils have equal opportunities to everything the school offers is a top priority. Additional learning support means all pupils progress at the same rapid rate. The mini-bus ensures all pupils can access school safely and on time each morning and stay after school for the popular clubs.
- **The governance of the school:**

- brings a valuable range of professional skills and local knowledge that are put to excellent effect to challenge and support the school, for example about attainment and the impact of how the pupil premium is used. Governors are frequent visitors and participate in activities such as hearing readers, enabling them to make very well-informed contributions to school self-evaluation and planning for further development.

## 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>	119619
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	403400

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>	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Philip Rydeard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Ross
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 June 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01995 640258
<b>Fax number</b>	01995 640258
<b>Email address</b>	head@st-marysclaughton.lancs.sch.uk



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