

St Ethelbert's RC Primary School

Melbourne Road, Deane, Bolton, Lancashire, BL3 5RL

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for every pupil at St Ethelbert's. She is well supported by a staff and governing body that are entirely committed to her view of how successful the school can be.
- Senior leaders and governors have invested in good quality staff training and new resources. This has resulted in improvements to the teaching and learning of reading, writing and mathematics.
- The subjects provided effectively meet the needs of all pupils. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed so that they learn to respect themselves and others.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors feel that their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils feel safe because they know that adults care for them well.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. They are extremely proud of their different roles and responsibilities within the school. For example, school chaplains who lead class worship, and 'lab techs' who are pupils who look after and distribute all required scientific resources.
- Teaching is effective, because it is well led and managed. All staff know pupils well and provide tasks that build on what individual pupils know and can do.
- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics because these are taught well.
- Children in the early years make good and sometimes excellent progress because of good teaching and activities that are well planned to develop children's enthusiasm for learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- School leaders are yet to ensure that all disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly and are as punctual as other pupils in school.
- Compared to non-disadvantaged pupils, proportionally fewer disadvantaged pupils are attaining at the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise writing skills in subjects other than English.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes taught by teachers and in activities taken by teaching assistants. One observation was carried out jointly with the headteacher and a learning walk around the school also took place.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and spoke to pupils during lessons, play times and at lunchtime. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with parents, staff, senior leaders and managers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. An inspector also met informally with parents as they dropped off their children at school.
- A range of documents were considered by inspectors, including the school's analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils' progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors took account of 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and of a summary of the responses to a parental questionnaire recently distributed by the school.
- Inspectors also considered responses from 26 staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is of a similar size to most primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is close to the national average.
- There is a small but increasing proportion of pupils at the very early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides full-time places for children in the Reception class and full-time and part-time places for children in the Nursery class.
- Two teachers, including one senior leader, have joined the staff since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning so that more pupils make outstanding progress and secure the highest levels of attainment by:
 - making sure that an increased proportion of disadvantaged pupils are supported to attain higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English.
- Further strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by establishing ways in which to improve the attendance and punctuality of disadvantaged pupils to help ensure their good achievement.

Inspection judgments

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has an extremely clear view of how successful the school can be. She is well supported by the deputy and assistant headteacher and by school governors. Together, they have effectively tackled the areas for development identified at the previous inspection. Moreover, they demonstrate the skill and determination to bring about further improvement.
- Staff support the headteacher's ambition for the school and confirm their dedication to contributing towards school improvement by very quickly and reliably implementing new practice. For instance, following training, they are all using the new marking policy and they are all rapidly introducing more practical and problem solving mathematical activities.
- Middle leaders are highly effective within the school. Together with senior leaders they check on the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils make. Monitoring procedures hold teachers to account and identify any training needs.
- School leaders are committed to making sure that there is no discrimination or prejudice at school and that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. For example, senior leaders have made good use of the pupil premium to reduce the achievement gap between groups of pupils currently at school. This has been done through tracking pupils' progress and planning activities to tackle the needs of individual pupils. However, there is still work to be done to make sure that the attendance and punctuality of disadvantaged pupils reaches similar levels to other pupils in school and that more disadvantaged pupils attain at the higher levels 3 and 5.
- The primary sport funding has been used well to increase opportunities for pupils to participate in sporting activities and inter-school competitions. Staff training has taken place to help staff teach sporting activities to a higher standard. As a result, participation in sporting activity has increased for pupils across the school.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and prepares them for life in modern Britain. The whole school enjoyed participating in 'British Day' when each class explored a different aspect of life in Britain and British values. For example, working hard to achieve what you want and respecting other cultures and faiths. Through the school council, pupils are encouraged to share their opinions and develop their understanding of democracy. Pupils' understanding of democracy was further developed when they visited the Mayor's Parlour in the town to learn about how local government works.
- There is a strong commitment to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding which helps to foster good relations across the school. Pupils know how important it is to behave well and respect each other. They spoke eloquently about 'Caritas Day' when all pupils considered how much they love and care for themselves and others. They also took the time and effort to anonymously do something special for another pupil.
- The local authority provides a good level of support to the school. For example, a local authority consultant has delivered training to staff to develop skills in teaching mathematics. In addition the governing body has been supported to develop the raising achievement group, which school leaders consider has had excellent impact on standards at the school.
- School leaders, including governors, make sure that staff and pupils are kept safe. Statutory requirements including safeguarding are met and, in many instances, provided at a level beyond what is required.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective. Members know about teachers' performance management systems and the actions taken to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. They also have an appropriate overview of the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and progress. This is because governors are committed to the school, visit as often as possible, look at pupils' work and receive regular, accurate and comprehensive reports from school leaders and staff. Governors keep themselves up to date with training, they know how to analyse information on pupils' progress, including nationally published data. This enables them to hold school leaders effectively to account for standards at the school. Governors are currently undertaking an audit of their skills to help them to identify any further training needs, to help them to become even more effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous and polite to each other and the adults around them. They enjoy learning and want to do their best work. Pupils look very smart in their uniforms and respond equally well to instructions and requests from all adults.
- Pupils feel that it is a 'privilege' to be able to take on additional responsibilities around school. For example, pupil councillors collect ideas from other pupils and report them to staff so that school can be 'even better'. Eco-warriors regularly pick litter in the area around the school and encourage all members of the school community to save water and energy at school and at home. Pupils described the work of the school chaplains as 'amazing' because they create their own prayers and lead class worship so very well. The 'lab tech' post is also highly regarded. These pupils put on a white coat and collect everything required for science lessons across the school, including muddy water when required.
- Pupils know how they are expected to behave. They know about the consequences if they make the wrong choice. However, they also say that hardly anyone ever gets to red on the behaviour system. Most parents who responded to Parent View and all parents who spoke with inspectors believe that behaviour is well managed and behaviour logs support this view.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- All parents who responded to Parent View or who spoke to inspectors feel that their children are kept safe in school. Pupils feel safe because they know that all adults in school care for them well and that they also care very well for each other. They feel that school helps them to understand risks to themselves including when on the road or near the water.
- Pupils understand different forms of discrimination and were quick to point out that, 'Even if you are only messing about you should not hurt anyone.' They also know exactly what bullying is and are helped to understand different forms through assemblies and class discussions. Pupils are confident that bullying is rare in school, but that if it did occur, staff would deal with it quickly and effectively.
- Overall attendance levels are similar to national levels. The school promotes good attendance for all pupils, by celebrating excellent attendance through the rewarding of certificates. However, the school's own records show that the attendance and punctuality of disadvantaged pupils could be better.

The quality of teaching is good

- Work seen in pupils' books, information regarding pupils' progress and other inspection evidence confirms that teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has improved and is now good over time.
- Reading is taught effectively across the school. Phonics is taught well to younger pupils. Staff have been trained to support small group reading sessions for older pupils which they feel is making a big difference to how well pupils understand what they are reading. Pupils are encouraged to use and develop their reading skills by researching topics on the internet and a range of on-line books are also available to pupils to read when they are at home to enable them to practise their skills regularly.
- Teachers always try to provide an interesting stimulus to pupils to help them make their writing interesting. For example, pupils in all classes were able to write imaginative pieces of work following the supposed discovery of dragon's eggs in the school grounds. Teachers provide a range of opportunities for pupils to write within English lessons. Year 5 pupils produced some excellent writing on Native Americans which linked their class topic on North America and their class novel, *The Indian in the Cupboard*. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to regularly practise their writing skills across a range of other subjects.
- Improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics has been a focus within the school for the past two years. Improved performance at the end of Key Stage 2 and work seen in pupils' books indicates that this drive has been successful. Teachers have engaged in a range of training activities and a new subject leader has been appointed. As a result, there are a wide range of practical resources available for pupils to use which they say they find helpful. Teachers introduce an exciting range of problem solving activities to each topic, which encourage pupils to think hard. For example, a group of the most able mathematicians were observed developing line graphs to show the progress of the tortoise and the hare across their legendary race. Pupils were thinking through scenarios that would affect the speed of each animal and then explained their line graph pattern to their friends.
- Teachers have high expectations of what they want pupils to achieve and, as a result, the quality and presentation of work seen in pupils' books is of a consistently good standard. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use this to clearly explain new activities to pupils. They use assessment

information well. They skilfully question pupils to assess their learning throughout the lesson, so that they are able to provide tasks at the correct level of challenge. A good range of resources to support learning and opportunities for pupils to share ideas and learn from each other are also regularly provided.

- Work is marked regularly, teachers praise pupils for work which is well done and provide good advice on how it could be further improved. What is more, staff reliably check that pupils do their corrections and then follow the guidance given in future pieces of work.
- Staff take great care to make sure that the individual learning needs of all pupils' are well met. Effective team work between teachers and teaching assistants guarantees high-quality support for all pupils including those with any additional needs. When teachers recognise that any pupil is not confident with their learning they quickly arrange extra learning sessions that are planned to successfully narrow any gap in knowledge and understanding.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Following a successful start to learning in the early years, pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to develop their skills well. As a result, by the time they leave Year 2, pupils attain at broadly average levels in reading, writing and mathematics, though attainment in reading and mathematics is slightly stronger than in writing.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 also achieve well. The progress they make across Key Stage 2 from their starting points has improved well and the proportions of pupils making expected and more-than-expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics is now similar to national levels overall. Results of the 2014 national tests for Year 6 pupils improved on those for 2013 and show that attainment in reading and mathematics is similar to national levels and improving. Attainment in writing is also similar to national levels though slightly below reading and mathematics.
- The performance of Year 1 pupils in the national screening check for phonics (matching letters to the sounds they make) is improving year on year. A higher proportion of pupils reach the expected level than do so nationally. Older pupils read confidently and enjoy the wide range of new books available at school and the increased opportunities to read provided by the school.
- Compared to other pupils nationally at the end of Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding made good progress from their individual starting points. They attained at approximately one term behind non-disadvantaged pupils in school and other pupils nationally in reading, approximately two terms behind in writing and over one year behind in mathematics.
- The school has taken decisive action to narrow any gaps between the achievement and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in school. There are now no gaps between achievement and attainment of groups in the early years. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils in classes across Key Stage 1 and 2 is now similar to non-disadvantaged pupils. However the proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching, and predicted to reach, the higher attainment levels 3 and 5 is below that of other pupils in school.
- The progress made by the most able pupils is improving and is now good. In the 2014 end of Key Stage 2 national tests an average proportion of pupils reached the higher level 5 in reading, writing and mathematics and currently in Year 6 there is an even greater number of pupils working at this level. Teachers now consistently provide challenging tasks for the most able pupils during lessons. In addition, mathematics activities are provided for groups of pupils at the local high school to help them develop their skills still further.
- The relatively small proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Their complex additional needs are met well because they are identified early, effective interventions are put into place and progress is carefully checked. Pupils benefit from good quality support from well-trained teachers and teaching assistants who work effectively with parents and external agencies. The additional needs of the increasing numbers of pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English are also well met as and when the need arises.

The early years provision

is good

- The majority of children enter early years with skills and knowledge below that typically expected and often well below in communication, language and number skills. When the children move up from Nursery into the Reception class they are joined by children from other settings.
- From their individual starting points children make at least good progress and some make exceptional

progress. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is improving and is now above the national average and so they are well prepared for the work that they will meet in Year 1.

- Parents who spoke with an inspector said that they were very pleased with how they and their children had been welcomed into the school through a number of exciting stay-and-play activities. They were also delighted with the workshops delivered by staff and feel that the information that they have received helps them to support their children's reading development at home.
- Learning activities both indoors and in the recently improved outdoor area are exciting and well matched to the abilities of individual children. All children have their personal challenges and feel extremely proud when they achieve them. For example, one child was very pleased to show that she could count to 20 because that was her challenge. Another group of children were challenged to carefully construct a den. They completed this beneath the felled tree which is an excellent resource and very well used to inspire children's creativity and build physical skills. The construction group then developed their speaking and listening skills by retelling the story of the 'Owl and the Pussy Cat' with helpful prompts from adults.
- Good quality teaching and learning is the result of effective leadership and management. The early years team work successfully together to plan appealing activities and provide good quality care. Children know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they will carefully wash their hands before enjoying snack time together because they want to stay healthy and don't want to risk becoming ill. Children behave well and show respect for others when learning together with or without adult support.

What inspection arrangements mean

School		
Grade	Arrangement	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	105222
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	452029

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tom Grady
Headteacher	Mandy Messham
Date of previous school inspection	16 July 2013
Telephone number	01204 333036
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