

St Catherine's CofE Primary School

Greenstone Avenue, Horwich, Bolton, Lancashire, BL6 5SJ

Inspection dates 14–15 May 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She is very ambitious and has high expectations of staff and pupils.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well through the school.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- Pupils' attainment in writing is particularly high.
- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are exemplary. They say they feel very safe in school at all times.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in an outstanding way.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating activities that encourage a love of learning.
- Leaders and governors work well together to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching.
- The school's actions to bring about improvement are carefully planned and effective.
- The care and welfare of pupils is central to the work of the school.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciative of the care taken of their children.
- The ability of leaders, managers and governors to carry on making improvements is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- On a few occasions, it is not always clear to pupils what they need to do to achieve success in their learning.
- At times, pupils' understanding while they are learning is not always checked effectively in order for changes to be made to take learning on more quickly.
- The skills of governors in stringently holding senior leaders to account for the school's performance are not yet fully developed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. Three of these were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, other governors, parents, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. The inspectors listened to groups of pupils read.
- Account was taken of the 38 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and 68 responses to a recent school questionnaire for parents about the school's performance.

Inspection team

Melvyn Hemmings, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector
Carol Machell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Catherine's is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education.
- The privately managed before- and after-school provision is inspected separately and the report published on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).
- The school has gained a number of national awards, including Artsmark and Activemark, and holds Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of teaching by:
 - making sure that pupils are always clear about what they need to do to achieve success in their learning
 - ensuring pupils' understanding is always checked rigorously while they are learning and actions taken to move learning on more quickly.
- Strengthen leadership and management by fully developing the skills of governors in stringently holding senior leaders to account for the school's performance.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

Good

- Children start school with skill levels that are generally below those typical for their age. From their different starting points, pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above average in English and mathematics. Attainment is particularly high in writing. This represents good achievement.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress across the areas of learning and quickly grow in confidence in making choices for themselves. By the end of Reception, most children attain a good level of development and some exceed this.
- Attainment in reading is usually above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and also by the time pupils leave school, although it is relatively weaker than writing. Leaders have worked effectively over the last year, with support from the local authority, to improve pupils' reading skills and increasing numbers are making better than expected progress. Pupils say they enjoy reading and talk with enthusiasm about their favourite books and authors.
- In Years 1 to 6, pupils seek to produce their best work and are interested and enthusiastic about their learning in different subjects.
- Pupils' writing is of high quality. They can express their ideas eloquently using a variety of styles, including poetry and narrative writing. This is evident in the work of pupils in Year 6, when writing a discussion text to examine both sides of an argument about whether zoos are needed in this day and age.
- In mathematics, pupils have well-developed calculation skills and use them effectively to solve problems in a variety of real-life situations. Pupils' quick recall skills are well developed across the four rules of number.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs do as well as other pupils because of the well-targeted extra support they are given in lessons.
- The most-able pupils make good progress because the work they are given effectively challenges them to achieve to their full capability.
- The funding for pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium has been used effectively to raise their attainment in English and mathematics. It has been used to provide support for small groups of pupils and individual support and this has successfully narrowed the gap in attainment and progress between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils in school. As a result, their attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is similar to that of other groups not supported by the pupil premium. This demonstrates the school's successful commitment to equality of opportunity.

The quality of teaching

Good

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults work well together to provide stimulating and practical activities across the areas of learning. They encourage children to make choices for themselves and to take turns and share resources fairly. Children are shown effectively how to improve their skills, such as when children in Reception were adding two numbers and recording the total.
- In Years 1 to 6, teachers have good subject knowledge and explain new ideas clearly and confidently. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and little time is lost in checking that pupils do their best and behave well. Praise is used successfully to celebrate pupils' achievements and to raise their self-esteem.
- Questioning is used effectively to find out what pupils know and to extend their knowledge and understanding in all subjects, including English and mathematics. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support all pupils, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.

- Marking is used successfully to show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils are given well planned opportunities to reflect upon their learning and to respond to teachers' clear and detailed suggestions for improvement.
- Teachers expect the best from their pupils and they respond positively by getting on well with their work. As one pupil commented, 'It's an amazing place in which to learn.'
- Outstanding learning was illustrated by inspirational teaching that enabled pupils of different abilities to achieve to their full capability. An example of such learning was evident in a session for children in Reception Year, in which they made exceptional progress in their understanding of letters and the sounds they make.
- The most-able pupils are provided with challenging activities that effectively stretch them to do their best. This often involves them in completing tasks that have more than one outcome which successfully develops their thinking skills.
- It is not always made clear to pupils what they need to do to achieve success in their learning. Pupils' understanding is not always checked rigorously while they are learning and intervention put in place to take pupils' learning on more quickly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well. One pupil commented, 'We have a sacred place in each classroom, in which we can go to reflect about our lives.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. It plays an important role in their successful learning, ensuring that lessons run smoothly without interruption. Pupils are highly considerate and very supportive of each other in lessons and there is a very welcoming and friendly atmosphere throughout the school.
- Parents, staff and pupils are extremely positive about behaviour. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the different forms of bullying, such as cyber and physical bullying. They say bullying does not happen in school because, 'We all get on really well together.' Pupils say they are confident that staff would deal with bullying quickly if it happened.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to school and consistently show a love of learning. They try hard to produce their work as well as they can and show a great deal of interest and enthusiasm in their learning in different subjects.
- Pupils' enjoyment of coming to school is shown by their above average attendance and the way they arrive on time. They wear their uniform with pride and work hard to keep the school tidy and free of litter.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The curriculum very effectively develops pupils' understanding of the potential dangers associated with roads, railways, water and the use of the Internet. As a result, they are highly aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils know the action to take if approached by a stranger.
- Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities, such as looking after pupils younger than themselves. They take great pride in their roles and carry them out diligently and, in so doing, they very effectively enhance the life of the school. During Enterprise Week, every class from Nursery to Year 6 was asked to set up a mini-business. Pupils had to think about and plan every detail, from business ideas to running costs. This very effectively developed their understanding of the world of work.

The leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and leads by example. In her role as a local leader of education, she has supported other schools in bringing about their improvement.
- Senior leaders and governors work well together to drive forward improvements. They successfully encourage all staff to do their best and morale is high.

- Middle leaders have a clear overview of learning through the school and carry out their roles diligently.
- The management of staff performance and training of teachers and other adults successfully meets whole-school and individual staff needs. There is a secure link between the performance of teachers and their salary progression.
- The school has effective procedures in place for gaining an accurate view of its performance. The promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination is good. The progress of pupils is checked carefully to identify if any extra support is required.
- Leaders and governors are meticulous in ensuring that all pupils are safe and well-looked after. Parents are very appreciative of this aspect of the school's work.
- Staff show respect for pupils and other adults. Relationships at all levels are good and contribute well to pupils' learning and development.
- The local authority has provided good support since the previous inspection, particularly in supporting an improvement in the teaching of reading.
- The primary sport funding has been used successfully to develop the expertise of teachers in teaching physical education and to increase the numbers of pupils that are taking part in sporting activities.
- There are good links with parents. They are helped to be involved in their children's learning and kept informed of the progress they make.
- Pupils' learning experiences are enhanced by a variety of extra-curricular activities, visits, and opportunities to work with a variety of visitors. For example, pupils in Year 6 have worked with a local artist to create high quality paintings in the style of famous Victorian artists. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in an outstanding manner.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are supportive of the school. They have improved their skills since the previous inspection but rightly recognise there is more to do in order to hold senior leaders to account for the school's performance more stringently. Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching, what school data are showing and how leaders tackle any underperformance. They know how the management of performance is used to improve staff expertise and reward good teaching. Governors manage the budget effectively and hold the school to account for the way the funding for pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is used to raise their achievement. The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are met.

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	132785
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	439605

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	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Terry Litherland
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Graham
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2009
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