

St John with St Mark CofE Primary School

Athlone Avenue, Bury, Lancashire BL9 5EE

Inspection dates

13–14 December 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- School leaders and governors have successfully created a caring ethos throughout the school. As a result, pupils are nurtured to become confident and self-assured.
- Relationships within school are excellent. Staff and pupils treat each other with mutual respect. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The school's effective promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education ensures that pupils appreciate and understand diversity and are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- While relatively new to their posts, middle leaders are proving to be effective. They have, for example, already brought about improvements in the progress that pupils make in phonics and mathematics. This indicates the school's good capacity for improvement.
- While progress is good overall, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are not yet challenged well enough to reach the highest standards.
- There is a lack of consistency in the use of assessment data and in the application of the school's feedback and marking policy.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Leaders have skilfully used the school's values to reinforce pupils' confidence and resilience, along with their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least as good progress as their peers.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It offers pupils a wide range of engaging activities to promote their learning.
- Children in the early years are supported well to overcome any barriers to their language development, including through good-quality teaching and the effective work of a speech therapist.
- The use of the pupil premium grant is not focused sharply enough in addressing the needs of the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- School development planning identifies the right priorities but there is a lack of clarity in how these actions will be undertaken and how they will be measured.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:
 - identifying strategies to make sure that the most able pupils are challenged in their learning
 - reviewing the effectiveness of the use of the pupil premium grant to support the most able disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest standards
 - ensuring greater consistency in the use of the school's assessment system and reviewing the effectiveness of the school's marking and feedback policy so that these further improve the progress that pupils make in their learning.
- Strengthen further the quality of leadership and governance within the school, by:
 - setting clear targets in the school's development plan that are linked to specific actions and identified outcomes
 - measuring accurately the effectiveness of these plans so that governors and senior leaders can evaluate the actions taken
 - ensuring that the pupil premium grant helps the most able disadvantaged pupils make the best progress possible.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher has built upon the strengths that were identified at the school's last inspection. He has a clear vision of how to continue to move the school forwards. This vision is shared by governors and staff alike.
- Middle leaders are helping to drive improvements in the school. This is evident in the standards pupils attain in phonics, the progress pupils make in mathematics, and in pupils' outstanding personal and social development.
- The school's culture is one of openness that nurtures pupils' relationships seamlessly throughout all aspects of school life. Whether cooperating in lessons, moving round the school or at playtimes, pupils' interactions with others are typically thoughtful and respectful.
- Pupils' behaviour and their personal and social development, including their understanding of equalities, are strengths of the school. Excellent leadership of these areas has ensured that all staff uphold the school's values and act as role models for pupils.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school's promotion of its key values contributes well to this provision. Pupils question, understand and accept others' views and opinions. They also listen to suggestions with respect and embody the school values at all times.
- High progress rates in mathematics have been brought about through a focus on pupils being able to work together to explain their thinking and approaches to solving problems.
- Staff appreciate the opportunities they have for professional development. One middle leader, for example, has been inspired to gain further leadership experience. Teachers who are new to the school speak enthusiastically about the support and coaching that they have received from other staff.
- The use of the pupil premium funding is having a strong impact in some areas, most notably in the employment of a speech and language therapist in the early years as well as providing additional teaching assistant support across the school. However, governors have rightly identified the need to review a large proportion of their pupil premium expenditure, particularly focusing on the most able disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, they have commissioned a review of the use of the pupil premium grant.
- The sports premium funding is used effectively to provide specialist coaches within lessons and a range of extra-curricular clubs. The impact of the use of this funding, however, is not analysed sharply enough to inform future planning.
- The local authority has supported the school through regular visits focused on leadership and management. This support has helped the new headteacher settle in to his role and has supported governors in their recruitment of senior staff.
- While the school development plan has identified appropriate actions to improve the school, these are not yet sharp or focused enough to ensure that all staff understand their part in these plans. The expected outcomes are not specific enough to achieve

the school's ambitions.

- The recently introduced curriculum is broad and balanced. Staff plan exciting opportunities to engage pupils in their work. Leaders have recognised that some aspects of the curriculum, geography, for example, need more development to ensure that skills progression is more consistent across year groups. Action is underway to address such issues.
- Pupils experience a wide range of activities such as trips to museums and zoos which are then used to support their learning in class. Pupils also value the range of extra-curricular clubs which include a dance club, film club, rugby, football, and netball among other sporting activities.

Governance of the school

- Governors are ambitious for the school and they have successfully supported the formation of a new senior leadership team by making some astute appointments. They are involved with the life of the school and ensure that they have a visible presence at events such as welcome evenings for new parents. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Governors have played a central role in putting the school's inclusive vision into practice. They have created a bright and safe environment that supports pupils' academic and personal and social learning. They have ensured that the school finances are sustainable so that this commitment can continue.
- When evaluating their effectiveness, governors have identified areas that they would like to improve further, most notably in the use of the pupil premium grant. They have already committed to conducting a review of this expenditure.
- Governors are not able to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the school development plan as actions are not clearly linked to outcomes for pupils, particularly the performance of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils are emphatic in their response to questions about their safety. It is clear that they feel safe and that they can approach any member of staff at any time if they have a concern. All of the parents spoken to agree that they have no safeguarding concerns.
- The designated safeguarding leaders receive annual training on their responsibilities and provide all other staff with regular updates. Newly appointed staff are clear about their duties and comment positively on the training provided as part of their induction. There is a vigilant culture in the school.
- Pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain is underpinned by the school's promotion of core values. The considered and careful approach to developing pupils' personal qualities provides them with an awareness of issues that could potentially affect their safety, such as exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. This enables them to make sound choices in order to keep themselves safe.

- Safeguarding records are securely stored. Plans for pupils who are looked after by the local authority are clear and focused on their needs.
- There are no recorded incidents of bullying. Pupils and staff agree that decisive action to address pupils' rare concerns means that hurtful behaviour is not repeated. Pupils have clear confidence and trust in all school staff.
- The awareness of safeguarding in the early years is excellent. All staff are aware of the statutory welfare requirements and receive training and support regularly.
- The local authority supports the school by providing safeguarding training. This has been effective in enhancing the school's overall safeguarding provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Pupils' excellent conduct is a clear strength of the school and this aids their learning. Calm, purposeful classrooms allow pupils to display good concentration skills and perseverance. The development of their social skills enables them to work alongside their peers so that they can support each other's learning. This was evident in a Year 4 mathematics lesson where pupils were encouraged to explain to each other their understanding of multiplication.
- Careful planning by teachers enables pupils to explore ideas and review their work. This was evident in a Year 6 debate where pupils watched themselves on video to review how they could improve their own performance.
- Year 1 pupils attain well in phonics. This is because lessons are characterised by adults' clear speaking of sounds, high expectations and a highly structured approach.
- Teachers build on pupils' learning from lesson to lesson. Teaching assistants are highly effective in supporting the least able pupils. However, the most able pupils are not always challenged to achieve the highest standards. They do not have opportunities to apply their knowledge to a wide range of contexts. In many lessons, they are asked to complete the same work as other pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well in class. The school's most recent assessment information shows that they make similar or better progress than other pupils within the school.
- Parents support their children well, particularly in reading. Pupils are also encouraged to take their science work home so that they can extend their learning beyond the school day. The work in their books shows that this has been successful. After-school clubs in phonics and in writing support pupils who require further support in their learning.
- Pupils' reading in key stage 1 shows that they use their skills in phonics well. This is reflected in the increasing proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. However, the teaching of reading does not always use texts that are matched to the ability of the pupils.
- The work in pupils' science and topic books is generally well presented, although the quality of writing in topic books does not match the standard in the pupils' writing books.

- Pupils are presented with a broad and balanced curriculum and links between topics enhance pupils' enjoyment of their work. For example, pupils study Charles Darwin through their writing, complementing their science work. There are, however, few opportunities evident for pupils to extend their mathematical skills beyond their mathematics lessons.
- Leaders are aware that teachers are not always following the school's policy for marking and feedback. As a result, not all feedback provided to pupils is effective.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils welcome visitors confidently. The harmonious way in which pupils conduct themselves around the school shows a clear awareness and respect for others. This is also true at playtimes when, if an accident does happen, the closest pupils help without hesitation. When talking to inspectors, one pupil summarised this by simply stating, 'We have got compassion for one another.'
- The school provides careers advice for pupils by inviting speakers in to talk about their jobs. In order to promote equality, the school has invited a male hairdresser and a female pharmacist to speak, among other guests. Aspirational figures are displayed in classes such as Martin Luther King, Maya Angelou and Anne Frank. Pupils are encouraged to challenge stereotypes through their study units of work such as 'women who changed the world'.
- The school's core values reflect fundamental British values. These values underpin the school's work and mean that pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain through activities such as studying and emulating parliamentary debates. Pupils clearly articulate why respect and tolerance are important. The school's work on the prevention of radicalisation and extremism is interwoven with the promotion of strong historical figures that have positively changed the world. Pupils are encouraged to think about positive personal attributes. Achievement and attendance are celebrated in assemblies where pupils are rewarded for promoting the school values.
- Inspirational leadership of behaviour has ensured whole-staff commitment to promoting pupils' moral, spiritual and social growth while experiencing a range of different cultures. The school choir embodies this commitment by including pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and faiths.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils move around the school in a purposeful and calm manner at all times. They are thoughtful and respect others' space.
- In class, pupils are engaged at all times. They contribute to class discussions in a considered way by working calmly together to solve problems and debate issues.

- All pupils trust the school staff and they agree emphatically that bullying in school simply does not happen. Rare incidents where behaviour falls short of expected standards are dealt with swiftly and decisively. The staff survey similarly reflected the conviction that bullying does not occur at the school.
- The school's most recent attendance figures show a small improvement for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders are determined to drive up overall attendance further as it is presently below the national average for primary schools.
- Pupils are rewarded for their exceptionally good behaviour with a range of structured and well-thought-out 'golden time' activities which pupils appreciate.
- Staff review pupils' behaviour and support a minority of pupils to reflect on how they can improve in the future.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Data from the national checks illustrates the increase in pupils' achievement in phonics in Year 1 and the considerable progress that pupils are making in mathematics to meet the expected standard at the end of key stage 2. However, the published information does not fully reflect the work done in the early years where children enter school with very low starting points and make impressive progress in their speech and language acquisition. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year shows a three-year trend of improvement.
- The focus on phonics has helped pupils become confident and fluent readers who show persistence when reading texts. Sometimes, however, books are not matched well enough to the ability of pupils for them to make more rapid progress.
- The school's own data for pupils shows good progress, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. The progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is at the expected rate of progress for their starting points and in many cases is much higher due to the support that these pupils receive.
- The most able disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress as they should because they are not provided with work that stretches their thinking.
- Work in pupils' books indicates that progress in science is very good and science skills are well developed across year groups. The presentation of writing in topic work, however, is not of the same standard as in the pupils' writing books.
- Pupils' excellent personal and social development ensures that they are equipped with skills that develop their self-confidence. The result is that pupils are determined and questioning while also aware of their responsibilities for other people. They know how to keep themselves safe by standing true to the values that they believe in.

Early years provision

Good

- In the early years, staff work hard to diminish the differences between children's achievement and the achievement of children nationally. They identify any gaps in the children's knowledge and provide additional support to enable them to progress well.

This is clearly evident in the support for children who enter the school with skills well below those typical their age, particularly as many start with significant gaps in their communication and language skills.

- Throughout Nursery and Reception, children progress well due to the additional support that is provided, not least the support of an experienced speech and language therapist. The latter provision clearly improves children's ability to communicate – building their confidence.
- Leadership of the early years is strong. The focus on ensuring that pupils are ready for Year 1 has resulted in an increasing number of children achieving a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year. From an early age, pupils support each other, for example by helping each other to work out missing sounds in their phonics work.
- In lessons, children are keen to learn and are engaged in a purposeful, stimulating, environment. The classes are well organised and structured. There are many opportunities in Nursery for pupils to develop mark-making.
- The school is proactive in engaging parents in their children's education. Staff are very effective in breaking down the barriers for parents so that they can understand their children's learning. Parents are happy with the school and feel that their children are safe and secure in school.

School details

Unique reference number	133929
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10003268

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Law
Headteacher	Mr Steven Ollis
Telephone number	0161 764 5330
Website	www.stjohnwithstmark.org.uk
Email address	stjohnmark@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 April 2012

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the use of the pupil and sports premium grants, charging and remissions policy or accessibility plan on its website.
- St John with St Mark CE Primary School is larger than the average primary school.
- The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well above the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment.
- Children attend the Nursery class on a part-time basis and the Reception class on a full-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all years of the school, including the early years. During these observations, they spoke with pupils about their work.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and spoke to others during breaktimes and throughout the day.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books from all year groups across a range of pupils and subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, other leaders, and a group of teachers and other members of staff.
- Inspectors considered 12 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View and spoke informally to parents at the start of the inspection.
- An inspector met with a group of governors and held a separate meeting with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including the school's most recent performance information, school policies, safeguarding records, the school's own evaluation of the school, the school improvement plan, information about the performance management of teachers and equalities information.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Maureen Hints	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Myatt	Ofsted Inspector
Sandie La Porta	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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