

Walton-le-Dale, St Leonard's CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119575
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379843
Inspection dates	5–6 March 2012
Lead inspector	James Kidd

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Simmons
Headteacher	Mike Phillipson
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

James Kidd

Steve Rigby

Alan Parkinson

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 16 lessons or part-lessons, taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, three groups of pupils, four members of the governing body, support staff, curriculum team leaders and the senior leadership team. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, internal and external pupil progress data, pupils' workbooks and documentation in relation to safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors also analysed 92 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a broadly average-sized primary school, with a smaller proportion of girls than seen nationally. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. Most pupils are White British and there are currently no pupils on roll who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well below that usually found. St Leonard's is a nationally accredited Healthy School and has the Activemark award for its work in physical education. The school is also an Investor in People and holds the Financial Management in Schools Standard. The governing body administers the Time Out initiative, which comprises breakfast and after-school clubs. The school meets the government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good and improving school. It is not outstanding because pupils' skills in writing are not as good as they should be. Nonetheless, pupils receive outstanding care, guidance and support from teachers and from the talented team of teaching assistants, including those with the higher level qualification. The Time Out Club is popular among pupils and is led expertly by a well qualified team of adults, all of whom have a sensitive approach to the needs of those who attend.
- Attainment is continuously well above average and all groups of pupils achieve well across the school. The school recognises that pupils' attainment in writing, although still above average, lags behind that in reading and mathematics and strategies to address this issue are beginning to have a positive impact. In the Reception class, for example, children's progress in writing is improving at pace.
- The quality of teaching is never less than good and there are examples of outstanding practice. The leadership of teaching and learning is effective and teachers receive detailed feedback on their performance and accurate advice on how this can be improved further. However, the sharing of exemplary classroom practice is not fully developed and the tracking of pupils' progress is not yet embedded.
- Pupils are proud of their school and comment that they feel safe within its walls. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is good overall and they display high levels of engagement in the thought provoking assemblies. Pupils are concerned to look after each other and they speak highly of the 'buddies' and of the older pupils who support younger children in the Reception class. Attendance is high and pupils are invariably punctual to school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide inspirational leadership and are ably supported by a dedicated senior team. They lead by example and promote accurate self-evaluation in all areas of school life. Members of the governing body have a good understanding of school performance and they hold the leadership to account with rigour.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing, particularly in Key Stage 2, in order to ensure that standards in this subject match those in reading and mathematics by:
 - extending opportunities for pupils to write in all subjects of the curriculum
 - disseminating across the school effective strategies to promote writing.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - sharing outstanding practice already evident
 - further developing the rigorous tracking systems to monitor the progress of all groups so that pupils' individual learning needs are identified even more rapidly.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

It is very evident from pupils' enthusiasm and the smiles on their faces that they make good progress in lessons. They are eager to learn. As early as the Early Years Foundation Stage, they are delighted to show visitors their work and to read it to them. Pupils across the school show pride in their work, present their assignments neatly and respond positively to the written comments of their teachers. They are proud when their work appears on display in classrooms and on corridors. Pupils enjoy working collaboratively with their classmates and are more than willing to seek advice from each other in their learning.

Children enter the Reception class with skills which vary over time, but which are generally in line with those typical for their age. They make good progress in writing and, quite independently, write stories at home and put written labels on objects in the vibrant Reception classroom. Their reading skills are improving well, too, and they combine letters to pronounce words with enviable accuracy. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading is well above average and more-able pupils read aloud with real expression. This good progress continues across Key Stage 2 and, by the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in reading especially in comprehension and intonation continue to be well above that usually found and most display an impressive level of fluency.

The achievement of all groups of pupils across the school is good and attainment is well above average by the end of Year 6. Parents and carers are accurate in their positive views of the progress their children make and of the standards they reach. Indeed, gaps in the performance of different groups, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, for example, are narrowing compared to all pupils nationally because they make good progress. Progress and attainment in writing, particularly in Key Stage 2, lag behind performance in reading and mathematics, although they are improving strongly. The school recognises this and strategies introduced to address the issue are beginning to take effect. Staff recognise that the dissemination of effective practice to promote writing, for example the production of The Gruffalo booklet in Year 2 and the multi-material approach in Year 3/4, is of the essence if attainment in writing is to rise further.

Quality of teaching

Relevant professional development opportunities, regular lesson observations and accurate feedback on performance ensure that teaching continues to improve. Indeed, the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school and there are examples of outstanding teaching in all key stages. The school is aware that the wider sharing of this exemplary practice is essential if teaching is to continue to improve at its current rate. Almost all parents and carers agree with inspectors and are of the view that their children are taught well.

In the best lessons, a Year 2 literacy session, for example, pupils are engrossed in their work, support each other's learning exceptionally well and are challenged to think more deeply about the subject matter. After giving accurate comments on the major differences between fiction and non-fiction, pupils in this group commented, 'This work is hard but it is good for our brains!' 'Hot seating', when individual pupils are questioned by the rest of the class, is also a strong feature of impressive teaching and learning. In Year 3/4, for example, this approach challenged the interviewers, who had to think up tasking questions to ask of their classmates; it challenged the interviewed, too, who had to empathise with the characters in the Billy Goats Gruff story. On occasions, there is too much teacher talk in the classroom and a 'one size fits all' approach to activities. Nonetheless, excellent small group and one-to-one support from both teachers and teaching assistants ensures that pupils remain on task and that they can take full advantage of what the lessons have to offer. Very well regarded 'in school' training on the monitoring of pupils' progress has improved staff's awareness of how data can be used to promote learning. Currently, these systems are not fully exploited to ensure that pupils' individual learning needs are identified as rapidly as possible. Teachers use the curriculum effectively to extend prior knowledge and skills. There are, however, insufficient opportunities for pupils to reinforce their writing skills in all subjects. The 'creative curriculum' is enriching pupils' experiences and has a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Marking is a major strength of the school. It is regular, consistent in quality and gives pupils accurate advice on how they can improve their work. As a result, most pupils are aware of their targets and of how to reach them. They also value the opportunities they have to evaluate the quality of their own work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All pupils interviewed believe they are safe in school and that they can recognise unsafe situations. All parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are of the same opinion. As they say, 'The school has a team of motivated and caring staff. Our children are safe and thrive both academically and personally.' Pupils, parents and carers also speak very highly of the breakfast and after-school clubs and they are grateful for the welcoming approach of the staff that run them.

Older pupils look after younger ones, 'buddies' ensure that no one is lonely at breaks and lunchtimes and the Year 6 class accompany Reception children to church. Pupils from all groups, including those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, feel supported by their peers and by the adults who work with them. They comment, 'Everyone helps everyone here!' Indeed, the care, guidance and support provided by teachers and teaching assistants are of a high order and emphasise the importance of developing pupils personally and, in this way, promoting their emotional development and raising their

confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are therefore proud of their school and their attendance is high.

Over time, pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good overall and is frequently outstanding. They particularly enjoy assemblies, when they play a full part, express their opinions and give full vent to their singing. Warm relationships between pupils and between pupils and the adults who work with them are the order of the day. Pupils are grateful for the school's serious approach to the prevention of bullying and they have a sound understanding of the different forms bullying can take. They say that bullying happens in school, but that it is infrequent and that it is always dealt with effectively by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils have an enviable social conscience and are proactive in their support for a variety of charities, local, national and global.

Leadership and management

All staff, including pastoral and curriculum leaders, hold the headteacher and deputy headteacher in high regard and say, 'Our leaders support us and listen to us. Our views are important to them but they are never afraid to make difficult decisions. Our school is about developing pupils both academically and personally.' Indeed, this is a thinking school, in which principled leadership ensures that complacency is rejected and that self-evaluation is both honest and accurate. Consequently, leaders are fully aware, for example, that pupils' skills in writing are underdeveloped and that the sharing of exemplary practice in teaching is integral to improving quality in the classroom. The relatively new curriculum teams, members of which value the cross key stage discussions, are proactive in their identification of areas for development. It is too early to see the full impact of their work, but they already have a profound understanding of all aspects of school performance. The governing body, too, supports the school well, has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and holds the leadership rigorously to account. These high levels of teamwork from academic, pastoral and administrative staff ensure that the school runs well on a day to day basis and that there is a clear and shared vision for how St Leonard's is to move forward. The school, therefore, has a good capacity to sustain its improvement.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and has a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils now have a better understanding of the diversity of cultures within the United Kingdom. There is a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, in which sport and games loom large. Outdoor learning is emphasised, too, and 'the classroom in the woods' is a key feature of provision in Key Stage 1.

The school promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination effectively on the rare occasions it may occur. Safeguarding and child protection procedures and policies meet national requirements.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



7 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Walton-le-Dale, St Leonard's CE Primary School, Preston, PR5 4JL

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us at lunchtime. Your comments were very valuable in helping us to make our judgements about your school and we would now like to share these judgements with you.

St Leonard's is a good school and we know you are very proud of it. You behave well in lessons and around school and your attendance is high. You feel safe in school because of the outstanding support you get from the grown-ups who work with you and because you take very good care of each other too. Older pupils, for example, look after the children in Reception and accompany them to church. The teaching you receive is always at least good and it is sometimes excellent. As a result, you make good progress in your studies and you reach standards which are well above those which we usually see. Well done!

All the staff in school work really well as a team. They are always trying to think of ways to make St Leonard's even better for you. We would like to help them do this and so we have asked them to give you more chances to practise your writing in all your subjects, so that your writing skills get better and better. We have also asked them to give your teachers more opportunities to share their ideas with each other so that the teaching you receive gets better and better too.

Thank you again for your contribution to the inspection and for your kindness and courtesy to us. We enjoyed watching you learn and we thought your singing in assembly was marvellous! Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

James Kidd
Lead inspector

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