

# Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School

Emerson Road, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 5SN

**Inspection dates** 20–21 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The improvement since the last inspection has been rapid. Attainment has risen and progress improved. Achievement is good. Standards are above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, individuals in receipt of the pupil premium and those with English as an additional language make good progress.
- Teaching is good. The diverse needs of pupils are met and lessons are interesting. Assessment is used effectively to identify any individuals requiring extra support.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils display excellent attitudes to others. Everyone gets on well together regardless of background.
- Attendance is improving at a good rate. Families are now aware of the need to avoid unnecessary absence. This is helping pupils to do better at school.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher is driving the school forward. Staff morale is very high. Great pride is evident amongst pupils and all adults in how well the school is performing.
- Good management of teachers' performance constantly develops their skills. This has a positive impact on achievement and pupils' learning.
- Governors support the school effectively and challenge staff to do even better.
- There is a good capacity for sustained improvement in future.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing lags behind that of reading and mathematics because more-able pupils are not always provided with enough opportunities to reach the highest levels.
- While the curriculum is sharply focused on raising achievement in English and mathematics, it is not planned as effectively in other subjects.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in every classroom, held discussions with pupils and staff, met the Chair (designate) of the Governing Body and the school improvement partner employed by the local authority. In addition, the inspection team evaluated the quality of pupils' work available in their books and folders.
- Inspectors took account of recent questionnaires of parents' views in planning the inspection and in forming judgements. Inspectors considered any responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspection team looked at a range of school documentation. These included the documents related to safeguarding, the school improvement plan, the school's self- evaluation, records related to behaviour and attendance and to pupils' attainment and progress.

## Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Neil Dixon

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are supported by school action. This is also the case for the proportion of pupils receiving support for school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Around two-thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is higher than average. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school makes available a breakfast club for families.

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

- Raise achievement in writing so that it is closer to that of reading and mathematics by:
  - creating strategies to provide higher challenge for pupils who have the ability to reach the higher levels in writing
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to write in a variety of different subjects and contexts
  - refining the quality of marking and guidance offered to pupils so that high quality guidance is provided consistently.
- Develop the curriculum to raise achievement in all subjects by:
  - developing the expertise of staff so that the high quality teaching in English and mathematics is applied to all subjects
  - refining the quality of curriculum planning so that pupils' achievement in all subjects can be better tracked and monitored and areas for improvement identified
  - opening up opportunities for pupils to acquire better skills of working independently.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### is good

- Attainment is rising at a good rate and progress is accelerating rapidly. Standards in Year 6 have risen to just above average. Remarkable progress is occurring in reading. In 2012, unvalidated test data indicates that a higher than average proportion of pupils exceeded the expectations for their age and attainment was above average.
- There is a similar picture in mathematics. Attainment is above average and a higher proportion of pupils than average work at levels exceeding the expectations for their age. In writing, progress is accelerating but attainment is lower than in mathematics and reading. This is primarily because too few pupils gain the higher levels. Given pupils' starting points on entry to Year 3 that are just below average, these academic outcomes represent good achievement.
- Excellent procedures for monitoring the progress of different groups of pupils, coupled with the shrewd deployment of staff, have enabled the needs of all pupils to be identified and provided for. As a result, almost all pupils are making better than expected progress. This is the case for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and for the large majority of pupils with English as an additional language. The large majority of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well because of the good support they are given.
- Robust data held by the school indicates that the gap in performance between pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those who are not is narrowing rapidly. This is as a result of very effective use of assessment by leaders and managers which secures a clear focus on the needs of such pupils.

### The quality of teaching

### is good

- Pupils benefit from committed teachers who provide very well-planned lessons that are often imaginative and interesting. Consequently, pupils like learning. One pupil stated, 'I would come to school at the weekend if I could'. This enthusiasm generated amongst pupils is a key factor in their good and rapidly accelerating progress.
- Very good use of assessment makes sure that lessons in all subjects are planned to match pupils' requirements. Pupils understand the goals for each lesson and usually know exactly how well they have achieved them.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of marking. At its best, it is done alongside the pupil and sets out crystal clear guidance for improvement. Guidance, at times, however, is not clear enough and comments for improvement are not followed up.
- Good use is made of information and communication technology to enhance learning. Pupils use computers to support learning in a variety of subjects.
- Excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants provides high quality guidance to all pupils, but particularly those who struggle with aspects of reading and mathematics.
- English is taught well. Pupils are successfully encouraged to love books. They read regularly on their own, with their classmates and at home. A recent decision to adopt a class-book to underpin the literacy work successfully motivates learners. Care is taken to make sure that pupils can not only read the texts but also understand them.
- A strong emphasis on teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling is boosting the quality of writing. Increasingly, teachers create opportunities that inspire pupils to write, for example, by creating character studies based on the book 'Flat Stanley'. Drama and role play is used to capture the pupils' imaginations so that they want to write. Such techniques also widen pupils' vocabulary, which for many is narrow.
- Pupils do not yet write enough in subjects across the curriculum. This reduces achievement and holds back the progress of more-able pupils.
- The teaching of mathematics is a strength. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of

pupils. A good focus is given in lessons to securing a good understanding of basic number, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

- Close attention is given to deepening the pupils' understanding of mathematical language. For example, in learning about the different terms that mean multiply such as, 'times', 'lots of' and 'product'. This helps pupils who struggle with English to improve their performance.
- At times, teachers do not expect enough of pupils or provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and develop the confidence to make decisions about how and what they learn.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Everyone involved in the school shares the same approach to promoting desirable behaviour amongst pupils. This consistency has resulted in good and at times excellent behaviour. Pupils have tremendous pride in their school and talk with great enthusiasm about how much it has improved. All pupils get on together very well; they respect each other and celebrate the richness and diversity of faith and culture within the school.
- Pupils report that they feel safe and that bullying or teasing is very rare. Occasional disagreements occur which are handled very well by staff and by pupils. There is no evidence of harassment related to any pupil based on their appearance, race or faith.
- The few pupils who struggle with controlling their behaviour benefit from high quality support from teachers and skilled support staff. Regular opportunities for some pupils needing emotional support benefit from attending the 'Flower Room'. Pupils are nurtured and encouraged to gain confidence and develop self-belief. This enables every pupil to feel valued and have worth.
- Pupils behave sensibly and safely. They are aware of the choices required to avoid risk and to protect their health. They influence decision making through the school council. Many have a good awareness of others less fortunate than they are. Events such as the 'Great Bake' are helping pupils to develop a good awareness of Fairtrade and its activities.
- Attendance is rising rapidly. It has lifted from below average to broadly average. The improvement is because of the determination of the school to follow up absence. The appointment of a member of staff to work with families in order to reduce absence has been very successful.
- The pupils who attend the breakfast clubs benefit from a settled start to the school day. Having enjoyed cereal or toast and a drink, they are ready to work when school gets underway.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher, supported by a very competent deputy headteacher, has delivered rapid improvement since the last inspection. A very strong staff team exists in which everyone takes responsibility for monitoring the school's performance and pursuing strategies for school improvement.
- Assessment is used very well to monitor the school's performance and seek areas for improvement in English and mathematics. Such systems are not as robust in other subjects.
- All staff share a very clear vision of how to move the school forward. Senior leaders astutely identify the talents of staff and employ good strategies to foster them. This is through excellent procedures for performance management linked to continuous professional development and training.
- Great success has been gained in raising the performance of teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are now well-equipped to offer good support to all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The local authority has played a big part in the school's improvement. A raft of initiatives has enhanced training and improved the quality of teaching. Input has been given to strengthening

the role of middle leaders and supporting governors as they develop their roles.

- Productive partnerships with other schools benefits staff and in turn pupils. Links with a special school adds to the quality of education for some pupils with a statement of special educational need. Liaison with local primary and secondary schools adds to the quality of staff development and to the curriculum.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. A recent questionnaire survey conducted by the school indicates high rates of parental satisfaction. Good strategies are in place to engage even better with some families so that their children benefit even more from school life.
- The curriculum promotes good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Much time is given to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. While planning for other subjects is adequate it is not as rigorous and does not ensure that achievement in all subjects can be accurately monitored and improved.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - governors offer good support and challenge. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met fully
  - they oversee the performance of the school and have fully backed the headteacher in taking steps to improve teaching and in seeking a return when staff seek to move up the pay ladder
  - care is taken to monitor the efficiency of budget allocations for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and for those eligible for the pupil premium funding.

## 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>	119354
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	405853

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	195
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kenneth Wales (Chair Designate)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jill Alexander-Steele
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 February 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 792083
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
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