

Ashleigh Primary School

Ross Street, Darwen, Lancashire, BB3 2JT

Inspection dates 9-10 October 2012

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and leave school with attainment that is above average and rising.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy coming to school because they are provided with an exciting range of activities.
- Teaching is good overall and some outstanding teaching was seen. Most lessons are interesting and show teachers' good subject knowledge.
- Behaviour is good and on occasions exemplary. Pupils are welcoming to visitors and polite and respectful to all. They feel safe because the school teaches them how to look after themselves.
- The new headteacher has quickly audited the school's needs and with the support of other leaders and governors has established a clear direction for the future. Changes are having a positive impact on progress and provision and the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet consistently good or better and a few shortcomings, especially in the pace and challenge in a few lessons, are not fully resolved.
- Skills in writing are not secure in all classes and the more able pupils do not always make as much progress as possible in mathematics.
- The new subject leaders are not yet fulfilling their monitoring role effectively enough to ensure their action plans include very precise actions that link closely to outcomes for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teachers in all classes. They visited 16 lessons and conducted a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Pupils from different classes read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors reviewed work in pupils' books with a focus on writing.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, tracking information and documents about safeguarding.
- The views of 29 parents were analysed through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) website. Other parental views were sought at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Gaunt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than the average sized primary school. Three classes contain pupils from two age groups.
- The great majority of pupils are from a White British background and no pupils have English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is low.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are new since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment even higher in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring pupils increase their accuracy in spelling and punctuation
 - ensuring that in mathematics the more able pupils make as much progress as possible especially in their ability to solve problems.
 - Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching throughout the school so that it is always good and more becomes outstanding by:
 - ensuring all lessons are challenging, brisk and exciting enough to interest all pupils
 - checking during lessons that questions and work are closely targeted to pupils' ability.
 - Further develop the roles of subject leaders to ensure that action plans identify with greater precision the areas that most need attention to raise outcomes for pupils.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are typical of those expected for their age, although less so in language and communication skills. Improvements to the environment and teaching have raised progress to good over the last two years. Many now start Year 1 with attainment above that expected for their age. Boys have tended not to do as well as girls and teachers now make activities more attractive to boys and this is narrowing the gap in their achievement.
- Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good. The trend in attainment is accelerating in Key Stage 2 with an increase in pupils exceeding the average set for their age. This is not yet as apparent in mathematics as it is in reading and writing. Overall, attainment when pupils leave Year 6 is above average and well above average in reading.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is recovering from a dip and is now moving to above average especially in reading. The vast majority of pupils make the expected progress in this key stage with a rise in those now making better progress from their starting points.
- Throughout the school some more-able pupils are not always making consistently good progress in mathematics especially in problem solving. Many leave school with above average skills in writing because they structure their work successfully and write imaginative stories. However, as yet accuracy in spelling and punctuation is not secure in all classes.
- The school has successfully put in place a more structured approach to teaching pupils their letters and sounds. For the younger pupils, active and enjoyable sessions enhance their skills. To tackle an apparent lack of boys' enthusiasm for reading, new books are being provided to capture their interest. Pupils now read to find information as well as for pleasure.
- Improved tracking is enabling teachers to keep a closer eye on pupils' progress. This has accelerated the progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. In class their needs are met by effective support from teaching assistants although on occasions the task is not always set at the correct level.
- The school has few pupils supported by the pupil premium but careful attention is given to ensure they make similar progress as their peers. Funding is currently spent on booster groups, one-to-one support and help for social problems from the well-being mentor. This enables pupils to overcome difficulties and to be in a better position to take advantage of the good teaching provided.
- The use of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects accelerates pupils' progress. The opportunity to be involved in business and fund-raising projects gives older pupils a real insight into the world of work. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the future.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is improving with most now being good and some outstanding observed. All lessons include positive features including the management of pupils that is firm and friendly ensuring lessons run smoothly. Classrooms are attractive with displays celebrating pupils' achievements as well as offering prompts to guide them.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage teachers make learning exciting. They encourage independence and are quick to offer advice to extend learning. Children made an imaginative collage outdoors showing that they understood in their story the grandfather was blind and needed things that he could feel. In the Reception/Year 1 class, although children make use of the outdoors, it is not as easy to access as a natural extension to learning.
- The best lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 go at a brisk pace with teachers often setting a time to complete a task that sustains pupils' efforts. Pupils are encouraged to share ideas with a partner but this technique is not always effective if overused or the point for discussion does not inspire pupils. In lessons that require improvement the pace slows, often with too much teacher talk

that prevents pupils settling to work quickly enough.

- In most lessons teachers show good subject knowledge. In Year 6, pupils confidently refer to different parts of speech and know how these add interest to their writing. This is enhancing their grammar and punctuation skills although this is not evident in all classes. In a science lesson teaching similarly showed good promotion of terminology and pupils used this vocabulary correctly as they discussed organism and the effect of heat on yeast.
- Planning is effective and teachers make it clear what pupils are to learn and often include success criteria enabling pupils to assess their own learning. Marking is usually informative and pupils assess each other's work offering positive advice on how to improve.
- In the best lessons teachers make accurate use of assessment to challenge pupils and set work at their ability. Introductions to mathematics include quick fire questions at the level of the individual. This match to ability is not effective in all lessons and tasks do not always sufficiently challenge the more able pupils. This is especially so in mathematics when pupils need reassurance to apply their skills to solving problems.
- Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is mostly effective because staff and teachers plan together so that these pupils are fully included in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good. At playtimes, pupils are inventive when making up small games and older pupils play cheerfully with younger ones. They keep themselves warm with energetic fun and pupils talk proudly about their school. Relationships for many are exemplary and there is no discrimination or harassment.
- Pupils are happy in school and have positive attitudes to work. They relate this to their teachers' support with comments such as, 'teachers allow thinking time' and 'teachers take time with every pupil'.
- Attendance is above average and this is linked to pupils' enjoyment of school. They talk excitedly about the school's enchanted garden, their adventures in the school's mini-bus and many friends.
- Pupils say they feel safe. They understand what is meant by bullying, including the use of the internet, and say this is very rare. Name-calling is identified as a worry, but only rarely, and this is dealt with effectively.
- The great majority of parents who expressed a view consider behaviour is good and their children are safe in school. There was a small amount of concern raised about bullying but overall the school's systems to manage behaviour are effective. Exclusions are minimal indicating behaviour is typically good.
- The atmosphere in school is warm and friendly. Pupils are eager to help visitors. When all come together for singing there is a real sense of belonging to a community.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher have quickly made changes that are having a positive impact on attainment. Tracking of pupils' progress has been especially intensified. Staff know the how well pupils are progressing and through regular meetings with the headteacher are called to account for how well the pupils in their class are doing. Accurate self-evaluation means the school knows its strengths and weaknesses and is well placed to improve in the future.
- A team approach to management is leading to more collaboration. New subject leaders are already raising attainment by sharing their expertise. In discussions they are clear about what needs attention but their action plans are not sharp enough and links to outcomes for pupils lack precision.

- Currently, the headteacher carries out most of the monitoring of teaching. This role is fulfilled diligently and results in teachers knowing what steps they need to take to improve. Effective performance management and staff training link to these next steps and help teachers to raise their skills with only a few issues not being fully resolved.
 - Pupils leave the school with many memorable experiences linked to a well-balanced and imaginative curriculum. Older pupils visit Paris and talked with great delight about seeing the painting of the Mona Lisa. The sound of drumming echoes through the school. Visits and visitors are linked to topics and make learning more purposeful.
 - The effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development leads to a harmonious community. Although opportunities to experience a wider range of cultures is not as strong as other aspects this is a school that positively promotes equal opportunities and instils in pupils their role in society.
 - The local authority has close links with the school providing effective support during the change in leadership. Training is bespoke to the school's needs and has contributed to raising the quality of teaching and learning. Courses for the governing body and newly qualified staff have also been beneficial to the school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - members of the governing body share their skills especially in financial matters ensuring the school now has a balanced budget
 - governors check that pupil premium money is spent prudently to meet the needs of these pupils
 - governors ensure that safeguarding meets requirements
 - the governing body challenges decisions and asks questions, although as yet governors are not involved in the early stages of the school's self-evaluation process.
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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	119200
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	403374

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shona Davis
Headteacher	Ian Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
Telephone number	01254 703171
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