

Skerton St Luke's CE VA Primary School

Slyne Road, Lancaster. LA1 2JH

Inspection dates 10–11 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress is not consistently strong, particularly in mathematics. Too many pupils do not make the progress that is expected nationally because the rate of learning in lessons is not always rapid.
- Teaching requires improvement – the work teachers give pupils is not always at the right level and teachers sometimes miss opportunities to involve pupils.
- When pupils are not engaged by the work they lose concentration, so behaviour is not good.
- Teachers' marking does not provide pupils with sufficiently clear guidance as to how they can improve their work.
- Systems to check and improve the work of teachers are not robust enough to bring about improvements.
- The school does not have a clear enough picture of the progress being made overall and by specified groups of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The school provides an attractive and welcoming environment for pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good and their attendance is broadly average and improving.
- The headteacher and members of the governing body have recognised previous weaknesses in the school's work and are taking effective steps to improve it. Some pupils are beginning to make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively. The large majority of pupils have a secure understanding of right and wrong and they value and respect the views and beliefs of those from other cultures.
- Pupils' attainment in reading and writing has improved since the last inspection. Some inadequate teaching has been addressed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 13 lessons or part lessons taught by eight teachers. They scrutinised pupils' work, observed the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with staff, members of the governing body, pupils, parents and a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors looked at school improvement planning, minutes from governing body meetings, pupil assessment and tracking information, and other documentation relating to the inspection, including that regarding safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the online Parent View to establish the views of parents.

Inspection team

Adrian Francis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Choi

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a little smaller than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is broadly average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average. The proportion supported at school action (19%) is above average whilst the proportion at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs (8%), is not significantly different from the national averages.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Pupils are taught in single-age classes throughout the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that most is consistently good or better by:
 - making effective use of assessment information to ensure that work provided for pupils is at the right level to engage and challenge all pupils, especially in lower Key Stage 2
 - ensuring that each lesson builds on and develops previous learning
 - providing pupils with more guidance about how they can improve their work and ensuring that they have opportunities to respond to this guidance.
- Improve pupils' rates of progress in mathematics across the school by:
 - having a stronger focus during lessons on 'learning' rather than 'doing' and raising teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of work produced by pupils in mathematics lessons
 - ensuring that pupils understand the relevance of what they are doing to everyday life
 - providing pupils with greater opportunities to discuss their learning with other pupils and with their teacher.
- Improve the effectiveness of the leadership and managing of teaching by:
 - improving how well senior leaders check and evaluate the impact of teaching
 - making more effective use of pupil progress data so that the school has a clearer picture of the progress being made overall and by specific groups of pupils
 - sharpening the quality of improvement planning through making targets more precise, measurable and firmly focused on how well pupils achieve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the school with skills and abilities generally below the levels expected nationally for their age. They get off to a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage making very good progress in most aspects of their development, with the new outdoor learning area being well used.
- By the end of the Reception Year most children are attempting to write simple sentences and phrases, have improving confidence with letters and sounds and are beginning to count confidently. They are confident and happy and they get on well together and with adults.
- Attainment in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 has improved since the time of the last inspection. The majority of pupils are reading with some fluency and are able to discuss their books and explain their choices. Although the school uses a structured approach to teaching letters and sounds, some pupils have difficulty blending letters together to make new words. This is because they do not have enough opportunities to practise this skill through a range of activities.
- Pupils make slower progress in lower Key Stage 2 in reading and writing, although progress picks up in Years 5 and 6. In these classes pupils write for a variety of purposes and teachers' expectations are higher. However, scrutiny of pupils' work shows that teachers through the school do not consistently correct errors in punctuation, grammar and spelling and this slows their progress.
- Although pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved in some parts of the school, pupils do not consistently make as much progress as they should. This is because lessons do not always build on previous learning and so opportunities to extend pupils' understanding are missed. This is particularly evident in the books of pupils in lower Key Stage 2.
- There are occasions when pupils make good progress because the sequence of lessons is well planned. For example, pupils in Year 5 were able to apply their knowledge of place value to a new challenge of adding together differing amounts of money.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs progress at a similar rate to their peers. Skilled teaching assistants provide additional support so that these pupils' needs are catered for using a range of resources within lessons.
- Pupils who are lagging behind in their work are monitored and identified for specific interventions. The school undertakes some evaluation of the short-term impact of such interventions as a whole and can demonstrate that progress results for most pupils who receive them. It does not evaluate the specific impact on pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium, although long-term records indicate that there is no significant difference between the achievement of these pupils and that of other groups, such as the few from minority ethnic groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching varies between year groups and classes, although an increasing proportion is good. Typically, teachers try to make lessons interesting to engage pupils but sometimes too much time is spent by pupils listening to the teacher. Although teachers ask a range of questions, pupils are not always given the opportunity to discuss their learning and share ideas, particularly in mathematics.
- In the majority of lessons relationships between adults and pupils are good and this makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching assistants are used effectively in most lessons by providing focused support for pupils who need additional help, working well in partnership with the teachers.
- The best teaching is typically well planned and captures the interest of pupils. The pace is often brisk with an increasing emphasis on involving the pupils and the lesson is focused on 'learning'

rather than 'doing' in order to develop pupils' understanding. However, this good practice is inconsistent across the school.

- In lessons where a very similar activity is given to all pupils of differing abilities, some pupils are not given work that is challenging enough. In these classes assessment information is not used well enough and, as a result, progress is slower.
- Most teachers use learning objectives to introduce their lesson and the most effective teaching highlights the 'steps to success' for pupils, relating the new learning to previous lessons. However, this practice is inconsistent across the school and this lack of building on previous learning hampers pupils' progress.
- Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and make comments about what they have done well but they do not consistently tell pupils clearly enough about how their work can be improved or what they need to learn next. This prevents some pupils from learning from their mistakes because they have few opportunities to correct their work.
- Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage have created a calm, safe and well-ordered environment in which there is a new outdoor area. The provision is well resourced and the activities are purposeful. At the time of the inspection children had only been in school full-time for a few weeks but already they were settled and confident in the purposeful environment. They worked and played together well, demonstrating improving social and emotional development.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Many aspects of pupils' behaviour are good. The vast majority of pupils are polite, friendly and well-mannered and they move about school in an orderly fashion. Behaviour requires improvement because good learning habits are not yet consistently established throughout the school. Most classrooms are orderly but some pupils quickly lose concentration and interest when they meet difficulties or work does not meet their needs.
- Pupils are not all fully in the habit of taking responsibility for working. For example, in a lesson in which they had to identify the characteristics of different types of triangles they were initially stimulated but then some pupils watched others do the recording and make the decisions.
- A minority of pupils find it difficult to take responsibility for their own behaviour, both in class and around the school. In lessons involving these pupils the disruption interrupted the learning and too much of the teacher's attention and time was taken up with a small number of pupils.
- The school's approach to encouraging positive behaviour, overall, is working effectively. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher was very clear in her high expectations and praised the positive responses of the large majority of the pupils. As a result, attention improved for a few children who were not concentrating well enough.
- Parents and some pupils have some concerns about behaviour overall. The responses to the Parent View questionnaire were not all positive about behaviour and safety but, in a parental questionnaire conducted by the school earlier in 2012, most were satisfied. Behaviour logs show that incidents of poor behaviour do occur but they are dealt with in accordance with the school's agreed procedures.
- In discussion pupils said bullying was not a big problem and that pupils mostly get on well. They were broadly aware of the different types of bullying and highlighted just a small number of pupils as instigators of poor behaviour. The school has firm plans to develop its work related to pupils' values and expectations and is about to launch a whole-school programme on this theme.
- Pupils mostly feel safe at school and understand how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. Attendance is broadly average and improving.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not yet led to securely good teaching and good pupil progress. The headteacher and members of the leadership team have had some impact on improving teaching since the last inspection and the local authority has provided effective support for the headteacher in these improvements.
 - Most of the essential monitoring and evaluation is undertaken by the headteacher, supported by subject leaders. This is beginning to have a positive impact and these leaders have an increasingly accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
 - The school improvement plan focuses on important issues about pupils' achievements, and resources are clearly allocated. However, it is not always clear how success will be measured.
 - The curriculum is well planned and there are increasing links between subjects and across the curriculum. There is a broad range of activities, clubs and visits. These effectively support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as their academic work.
 - Leaders monitor the work of teachers and provide guidance to help them improve. However, it is not always clear to teachers, or from the school's records, how effective their teaching is. Systems for observing the impact of teachers' work are not yet rigorous enough and do not fully take into account all aspects of the teachers' work.
 - Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good. All adults who visit the school are carefully checked. Child protection arrangements ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and pupils' absence is followed up effectively, led by the learning mentor.
 - The school has a wealth of data relating to pupils' assessments and how well individual pupils are doing in reading, writing and mathematics. However, these data are not used effectively to provide a clear view about the progress made by pupils overall or by specific groups of pupils. As a result, it is difficult for the school to be clear whether or not they are going to meet their challenging targets for any particular year group.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body have an improving understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Some visit regularly and know the school well. There is some governor involvement in evaluating the work of the school and discussing future priorities.
 - They monitor the work of the school through their visits and through monitoring reports provided by senior staff to their committees. They are provided with information related to the performance of the school but this does not yet extend to monitoring the overall quality and impact of teaching.
 - Their committees are well organised and this structure is supporting greater effectiveness. They provide an improving level of challenge to the headteacher and hold senior leaders more rigorously to account than at the time of the last inspection. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities effectively and ensures that financial resources are used well.
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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	119534
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	405867

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	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kath Foster
Headteacher	Jennifer Moore
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2010
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