

Lancaster Christ Church Church of England Primary School

Highfield, Derwent Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 3ES

Inspection dates 4–5 December 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Attainment by the time pupils leave school is above average.
- Teaching is good with some teaching being better than that. Lessons are interesting and pupils very keen to learn.
- Children do very well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils enjoy being in school. They say they feel very safe and cared for well. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils show a great respect for each other and for the adults in school.
- Governors are aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and ask questions about how well the school is doing as well as providing the right support.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school well with good support from the deputy headteacher and other staff. Leaders are good at identifying priorities and actions are ensuring the school is improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is good rather than outstanding. Some lessons include too much listening and questions do not effectively check how much pupils have understood.
- The skills of teaching assistants are not always used effectively throughout lessons.
- In subjects, other than English and mathematics, marking does not tell pupils what to do better next time.
- The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and how to use this knowledge to read unfamiliar words is not consistently good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. Additional short visits in lessons were carried out to look at important issues such as how well pupils get on with their classmates and how well they behave.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random, members of the governing body and with senior staff. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about the types of books they enjoy.
- Pupils' current work and assessment from the previous academic year were scrutinised, including information which showed how well pupils do in English and mathematics.
- Fifteen responses were received to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors reviewed the staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Louise Murphy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a below-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well below average.
- The school meets current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school has achieved many awards including Healthy School status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is outstanding by:
 - ensuring the start of lessons are brisk and do not include too much time with the whole class listening to the teacher
 - ensuring the skills of teaching assistants are used to maximum effect during lessons
 - making better use of questions to find out exactly what pupils know
 - extending the very good practice in marking found in English and mathematics to other subjects so that pupils are given clear indications about how they might improve their work
 - sharing the very best practice in teaching amongst staff.
- Check more closely that the teaching of letters and sounds is consistently good and is improving pupils' skills in reading and writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils want to do well and are very enthusiastic about the work they do. They know that teachers and support staff are there to help them and the very good relationships that exist mean that they are never frightened to ask for help if they need it.
- Most children start school with skills that are typical for their age. Good and at times outstanding teaching makes sure that pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The needs of individual children are taken fully into account when planning a wide range of learning experiences.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 to 6. Consequently, by the time pupils leave the school they reach standards in English and mathematics that are, regularly, above average. The school's current information about how pupils are doing and inspection evidence shows that the above average standards have been maintained.
- Pupils are able to apply their writing and mathematical skills well in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, some excellent writing in Year 2 has been achieved in a topic about Cinderella.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do as well as other pupils from their starting points because of the good support they receive in lessons. Teachers make sure that work is set at the right level for these pupils.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make good progress in line with other pupils. This funding is used effectively to provide a range of support. A key outcome of the support provided is shown in pupils' greater confidence and achievement.
- Attainment in reading is above average at the end of both Years 2 and 6. Pupils are keen to read and can talk knowledgeably about why they like a particular book and why they like a particular author. While attainment in reading is above average there is variability in the quality of teaching pupils how to attempt to read unfamiliar words. As a result, pupils do not make consistently good progress in learning and using their knowledge of letters and their sounds.
- Parents indicate that they are pleased with their children's achievements.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most parents consider their children are taught well in school and pupils agree with them. Very strong relationships between staff and pupils help create a very good atmosphere for learning. Teaching in all classes is usually good, with examples of some outstanding teaching. In an excellent Year 6 lesson, pupils were totally involved in finding out what needed to be changed in a grid calculation in mathematics. By the end of the lesson they could identify precisely what they had learned and what they still need to practise.
- An excellent understanding of the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress. Staff encourage them to be independent. Resources both inside and outside (despite some limitations caused by the actual size of this area) are consistently used successfully to extend children's skills in the Reception class.
- In Years 1 to 6 teachers expect pupils to achieve and behave very well and as a result lessons run smoothly. However, at times some teachers talk for too long at the beginning of lessons resulting in pupils not having enough time to complete what they have been asked to do in the time left in the lessons.
- Reading is taught generally well across the school but there is a lack of consistency in the way that letters and sounds are taught. Teachers ensure that pupils are given plenty of opportunities to extend their writing, mathematical and communication skills.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers recognise when pupils are not learning as well as

they should and make changes so that progress is rapid rather than good. Teachers work very successfully to provide activities that make learning exciting. For example, children in the Reception class made excellent progress because activities such as being asked to write their names on the census sheet as part of a topic based on the Christmas story provided a real reason for writing. Other children use models of people and animals in the sand tray to act out the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem and were totally involved in the activity.

- Where teaching is good rather than outstanding questioning is not always used effectively in identifying whether all groups of pupils have a good understanding of what is being taught. In these lessons teaching assistants are not always used well throughout the whole time they are there. However, support staff play an effective role in helping disabled pupils and those with special educational needs both in class and in small groups.
- Pupil's books are marked regularly and marking is of a very good quality in English and mathematics but less so in other subjects when it is not made clear how work can be improved.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The importance of thinking of others and fairness to everyone is high on the school's agenda.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- This is a school where pupils get on exceptionally well with each other and with the staff. This is a key factor in ensuring that good progress is made.
- Most parents are sure the school provides a safe environment and that pupils enjoy school and behave well.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils are unfailingly polite and are eager to share their many experiences about school. They are very proud of their school.
- A scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection demonstrate that behaviour over time is very good with isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour being dealt with very well.
- Pupils are highly confident and want to achieve well. They respond extremely well to the many opportunities provided for them to take on school responsibilities. These include being a member of the school council or helping out around the school. During the inspection the pride children displayed in acting out their parts, preparing for the school's nativity play and the effort put in to their singing were a pleasure to see and hear.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school can be seen in their above average attendance and the punctual way they arrive at the start of the day.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. They recognise dangers when using the internet and know how to avoid these problems. They have a very good understanding of different types of bullying. They are confident that should any ever occur, adults would deal with it quickly, fairly and firmly.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels carry out their responsibilities effectively. The headteacher has a very clear view of how successful the school can be and shares this effectively with staff and governors.
- The school's procedures for checking how well it is doing are accurate. As a result, the school improvement plan is firmly based on issues that could be improved further. Actions are clear and closely linked to raising attainment.
- The successful promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development plays a crucial part in everything the school sets out to do. It results in pupils being very thoughtful and kind. They reflect on their own situation and show a strong empathy for others perhaps not as fortunate as they are.

- Close checking on teaching has raised the quality of teaching with only a few variations between classes. Teachers are set targets to improve their work and meetings are held to check on pupils' progress in their classes. As a result, both teaching and progress have improved.
- Training for teachers focuses on improving individual skills as well as raising attainment. For example, a recent focus on improving pupils' writing skills has been successful although the teaching of letters and sounds remains an area needing attention. The staff questionnaires indicate that staff think highly about the leadership of the school and of the provision made for their professional development.
- Leaders ensure that no pupils, regardless of background, or need, are denied access to anything the school has to offer. Equal opportunities are provided for all pupils.
- Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders ensure that all requirements are met.
- The curriculum ensures pupils experience an imaginative range of topics. For example, pupils are proud to talk about the topic they have completed about ancient Egypt. Pupils say they enjoy lessons especially the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body discharges all its legal responsibilities well and keep up to date by taking part in regular training. Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. They review data on pupils' progress and ask questions if they identify a problem. In order to have a greater understanding and say in school affairs, governors link with subject leaders and are not afraid to ask searching questions. They are aware that teachers are set challenging performance targets. They keep a close check on the school's budget, and know how staff are rewarded. They make sure that, for example, pupil premium money is used to good effect and for the purpose intended.

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	119532
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	403395

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Hudd
Headteacher	Lesley Brookbanks
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
Telephone number	01524 60955
Fax number	01524 67681
Email address	enquires@christchurch-lancaster.lancs.sch.uk

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