

Medlar-with-Wesham

Church of England Primary School

Garstand Road North, Wesham, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 3DE

Inspection dates 28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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' behaviour and attitudes to school life are outstanding. They are eager to learn and their pride in the school constantly shines through. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Older pupils' standards are above average. Children generally join the school with weaker skills than is usual for their age. Pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is good and some lessons are outstanding.
- Senior staff and governors lead the school with vision and vigour, which motivates the best efforts of staff and pupils. Effective systems for the management of teachers' work and pupils' progress are securing rapid improvement. Teaching and pupils' achievement have improved since the previous inspection.
- Older pupils who are learning English as an additional language make rapid progress in response to very effective support.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Sometimes initial activities or teachers' explanations take too long; sometimes the pace is not fast enough and sometimes teachers do not intervene soon enough to help pupils or challenge them further.
- Some very young children who have just joined the school and who speak no English have not yet developed the learning skills to pick up English rapidly without more support.
- Due to staffing difficulties in the past, some younger pupils are not as far ahead in mathematics as they should be.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons, and seven teachers were seen. Two lessons had shared observations with the acting headteacher. In addition, brief visits were made to some classrooms and short sessions with small groups for the development of reading and spelling, English language development, or general support were observed.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also held meetings with senior and middle leaders and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents. These included pupils’ work in the current year, the school’s most recent national assessment results, information on pupils’ progress, the school’s evaluation of its strengths and areas for development and its improvement plans. Records on provision for those pupils who need additional support, safeguarding procedures, behaviour and attendance were also examined.
- Inspectors took account of eight responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and of the 11 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Jim Bennetts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stephen Wall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. About one sixth of the pupils are of Latvian or Russian family background and about half of them joined the school this term; eight are in the Reception class. All are learning English as an additional language; most of the youngest children speak no English.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium (additional funding allocated for pupils in the care of the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils whose learning needs are supported at school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action, or with a statement of special educational needs, is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in staffing. The former headteacher and acting deputy headteacher left in the summer of 2012. At present, there is an associate headteacher serving as headteacher on a temporary basis and two staff share the post of acting deputy headteacher. Class teachers in several classrooms are new to their current roles. One teacher started work at the school during the week of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement from good to outstanding by:
 - ensuring that lessons always provide enough time for the main tasks, always proceed with a brisk pace, and that teachers always anticipate when to intervene to give support or provide more challenge
 - improving language-acquisition support where necessary for children in the Reception class
 - auditing the mathematics knowledge and skills of pupils in Year 2 and providing support to make good any weaknesses in their mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' standards in Year 6 are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, with a high proportion achieving the higher levels. There has been marked improvement since the previous inspection. Older pupils' writing is often impressive. Pupils make good progress during their time at the school.
- Pupils' good progress is promoted by good teaching. Their rapid learning reflects their very positive attitudes. Pupils are keen to succeed and to support one another. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong; it underpins their good learning. For instance, Year 4 poems about the sadness of parting, and Year 1 artwork in the style of Van Gogh, demonstrate maturity in understanding human experiences.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs respond well to the support they receive. Their progress is at least as strong as that of others. The progress of pupils entitled to the pupil premium funding is recorded meticulously. They are making good progress from their starting points, often reaching standards as high as other pupils. Comparing data from the past with current evidence, these pupils are doing increasingly well. Recently, the school enabled a gifted pupil to reach a standard in mathematics equivalent to GCSE.
- Children generally have weaker skills than is normal for their age when joining the Reception class. For those children who speak English at home, their speaking and listening skills are actually weaker than is usual. This year, for the first time, over a quarter of those in the Reception class have recently arrived from Eastern Europe and have very little or no English. Children settle quickly in the Reception class and develop the ability to cooperate and concentrate, reflecting the excellent attitudes and behaviour that are firmly established across the school. Those with sufficient language make good progress and are often at levels typical for their age on moving to Year 1.
- Pupils are well taught in Years 1 and 2 and progress from pupils' starting points has generally been good. From year to year there is variation in the knowledge and skills that pupils have when they join the school. Rightly, there has often been strong emphasis on the development of communication skills. Many pupils now in Year 2 had weak attainment at the start and experienced some disruption to staffing. Their reading and writing skills are average but their mathematical skills are weaker.
- The school has enabled many pupils to learn English as an additional language speedily. They receive some support from a bilingual teacher who visits the school for five hours each week. Records for older pupils show progress in reading, writing and mathematics that is more rapid than that of the native English speaking pupils. Older pupils use the general learning skills that they have gained with maturity and are ambitious to master the language. However, in the Reception class, children with virtually no English are making limited headway. There is limited availability of support with the relevant bilingual skills and only modest funding has been made available by the local authority.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils are attentive, engage well with what teachers have planned and interact with one another very productively when working in pairs or small groups. They respect their teachers, and teachers respect them. In lessons and in the marking of work, teachers value pupils' contribution and steer it in the right direction. Pupils are keen to learn and want to please their teachers.
- In the best lessons, teachers expect vigorous effort from pupils of all abilities. The most effective teaching gives ample time for pupils to find things out for themselves. It is alert to pupils' needs, with effective interventions planned in advance, or provided as situations in the classroom develop. All teachers plan lessons that interest pupils and that are pitched at the right level for

them. They sometimes arrange for the more able to do harder work but sometimes pair pupils of different ability together. Mixed-ability groups made excellent progress in a science lesson where all worked together to test sound-proofing materials. Arrangements for the grouping of pupils and the planning of tasks are generally sensible and result in all making good progress and working happily.

- There are minor weaknesses in some lessons. Occasionally, a subsidiary activity at the start of the lesson takes too long. Some teachers' explanations take too long. Consequently, pupils sometimes barely complete the main task. In their planning, teachers do not always anticipate where pupils may struggle. Sometimes, when helping a particular group, they do not realise that other pupils need help or more challenge. Therefore, the pace in lessons is not always as brisk as it might be.
- Teaching assistants are effective. For pupils needing general support, there is clear documentation to guide the support provided. The help given is sensitive, timely and productive. The work of the learning mentor in helping individuals who struggle to learn, and with pupils and families who are vulnerable because of their circumstances, is highly effective. The use of pupil premium funding is efficient. With the limited number of teaching assistants available, there is rarely additional help in the small Year 2 class, where some is needed for pupils to catch up in mathematics.
- Sessions to develop pupils' recognition of spelling patterns and the sounds they make is systematic, well planned and well matched to pupils' capabilities.
- Specialist bilingual help provides excellent support for many pupils who are learning to speak English. This is augmented by sensitive support from teaching assistants and teachers. In the Reception class, the teacher and assistants make every effort to help those children with no English. However, more help is needed to get these very young children moving with learning words and formulating expressions.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

is outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is unfailingly excellent. Their exceptionally positive attitudes contribute strongly to academic progress. They are eager to answer questions. The presentation of their work is exemplary. Pupils' books and the school's records show that behaviour is a long-established strength of the school. With the few who, in the past, found it difficult to settle to learning, the school can explain how behaviour has been managed shrewdly.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They understand the forms that bullying can take, and that friends sometimes 'fall out'. They say that bullying does not occur and that they have complete confidence in adults to sort out any problems they might have. Parents agree.
- Pupils know how to look after themselves and one another. They know about potential hazards associated with the internet. They are consistently considerate of one another and courteous to adults. They participated with palpable conviction and enthusiasm in worship that focused on fortitude and determination in the life of an individual and that of the community. Pupils strongly uphold Christian values. Those on the school council attest to the strength of the community, exemplified by the willingness of everyone to make a positive contribution and to help less-fortunate people.
- Pupils' very high attendance and punctuality are indicative of their eagerness to learn and their love of the school.

The leadership and management

is good

- The acting headteacher is new to the school and those who share the deputy-headship are new to their role. Despite changes in leadership and many changes in the classrooms to which teachers are assigned, the school has gone from strength to strength. The trend of steady improvement over the last few years remains evident in classrooms. Moreover, very strong morale and motivation has been sustained among staff at all levels and among pupils. The

school is led with principled vision and dedication. All staff and governors share a strong commitment to Christian values that are the way-of-life of the school.

- Teaching and pupils' achievement are good. Improvement since the last inspection has resulted from effective management of teachers' work and training for specific roles, such as leadership of mathematics, over the last few years. This effective checking of the quality of teaching and staff training has continued under the school's new leadership. However, current leaders know that there is more to be done to raise pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching from good to outstanding.
- There are rigorous systems for checking pupils' progress and raising their targets where warranted. Procedures to ensure the progress of those who have particular learning needs are exemplary. The acting headteacher observes teaching, providing perceptive and sensitive advice for improvement. Senior staff know the strengths of the school and what could be done better. Well-considered improvements are being put in hand.
- Pupils' personal development is a priority for the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The range of subjects and additional activities is highly appropriate. In one newly introduced 'philosophy' lesson, young pupils gave discerning thought to why animals (and people) with minor differences sometimes fight. Year 4 pupils were passionate in learning from an expert cricketer how to handle a ball skilfully. The school welcomes those from other cultures who have joined the school community recently. Every effort is made with available resources to ensure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds have equally good opportunities for success.
- Policies and practice for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils are exemplary.
- Through a period of significant change in leadership and staffing, and with changing needs of pupils passing through the school, the local authority has provided wise counsel and sensitive support for staff and governors. That has made an important contribution to continuing improvement. The local authority has made a small amount of additional funding available for pupils who need help in learning to speak English.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely diligent and have a very clear perception of how things stand including teaching and achievement. They have brought impressive insight to the management of the necessary changes in the roles that staff carry out and ensure that teachers' targets are challenging. Governors are skilful in managing the budget, including the pupil premium funding, ensuring spending has a positive impact on outcomes. They are well-braced for on-going decision making to secure the school's continuing improvement.

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	119553
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	401850

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	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marjorie Towers
Headteacher (acting)	Liz Astbury
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2010
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