

Ellel St John the Evangelist Church Of England Primary School

Chapel Street, Galgate, Lancaster Lancashire , LA2 0JS

Inspection dates 24–25 January 2013

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' behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. They are eager to learn and work with each other very well. This helps them make good progress.
- Pupils are happy, well cared for and care for each other. They find their learning fun and are very proud of their school and the wide range of opportunities it provides for them.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They are confident that their children are kept safe and secure and regard the pastoral care of the pupils as one of its strengths.
- The school curriculum provides pupils with a rich and varied learning experience, which makes them enthusiastic about their learning. As a result, they make good progress.
- Teaching is good and improving. School leaders focus relentlessly on improving what goes on in the classroom and how it can be made better and this contributes strongly to the school's continuing improvement.
- Standards are above average at the end of Year 6. The number of pupils making more than the expected progress is much higher than the national average.
- School leaders check regularly and thoroughly on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This is highly effective in deciding on the needs of the individual pupils and of the whole school.
- Governors are highly committed to the school. They are well informed and hold the school leaders and staff robustly to account for what they do.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching, although good overall, is not yet enabling the pupils to make outstanding progress. It does not always set the right level of challenge for all pupils to enable them to achieve their very best.
- Marking of pupils' work is not consistent enough. It does not always tell the pupils what they have to do to improve their work or give them time to check and improve it.
- Achievement at Key Stage 1 is not as strong and pupils do not make as rapid progress as they do in the other key stages.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and this consisted of 15 lessons. In addition, they observed pupils taught in small groups receiving additional support.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils in meetings, in classes and on the playground and took account of the 36 responses of parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Meetings were held with governors, school leaders and staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including policies, incident logs, the school's monitoring of teaching and its improvement plan.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and checked the school's assessment of pupils' progress. They looked at the work in pupils' books. They also looked at the school's system for checking pupils' progress in English and mathematics.

Inspection team

Peter Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Ellel St John the Evangelist Church of England school is a smaller than average size primary school.
- A large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average (the pupil premium provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families).
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school has a Breakfast Club and after school Kids Club, which is run by a voluntary management committee.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in Key Stage 1, and enable pupils to make outstanding progress overall by:
 - making sure work is always set at the right level to meet the pupils' learning needs, thus enabling them to achieve their best
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to work independently and make decisions about their own learning
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to respond to questions in lessons so that their understanding can be checked
 - making sure marking consistently tells pupils how to improve their work
 - encouraging pupils always to check and respond to the advice teachers give when marking their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding which are broadly typical for their age. They settle in quickly, make good progress and achieve well.
- Progress is not as swift in Key Stage 1 as it is in Key Stage 2 and pupils' attainment when they leave Key Stage 1, although it varies from year to year, is broadly average. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and pupils, after a dip in standards in 2011 that school leadership has addressed successfully, are now achieving much better than pupils nationally in all subjects. Attainment is above average at the end of Year 6. Current data gained from the school's assessments indicate that the current Year 6 group of pupils is also on course to attain above average standards.
- The proportion of pupils achieving National Curriculum Level 4 or better in all subjects in 2012 was better than pupils nationally and the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was well above the national figures.
- Standards in reading in 2012 were not as strong as those in writing and mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 1. The school through its monitoring systems quickly identified this and took steps to improve it. Current assessments show that pupils are now progressing as well in reading as they are in writing.
- At the last inspection, writing was identified as an area that needed to improve. The school has worked successfully to bring about steady improvement and now writing is now above the national average in both key stages.
- The majority of pupils develop a reasonable knowledge of letters and sounds. The number of pupils who reached the standard required by the government in the Year 1 phonics screening test was above the national average.
- Pupils now read more widely and are well supported by their parents at home. This and the school's investment in books that are more appealing to pupils, particularly the boys, and the various initiatives the school introduced such as 'Extreme Reading' are contributing to the improvements now being seen in reading.
- As a result of the good use made by the school of the pupil premium funding, these pupils are being well supported. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are achieving just as well as other pupils in the school. Pupils told us, 'We get lots of support'.
- The school's assessment data shows that all year groups made at least good progress last year and current school data shows that all year groups and all groups of pupil are currently making good progress. This shows that the school promotes equality of opportunity well. Pupils who have special educational needs are doing just as well as other pupils because of the good support they receive in lessons.
- Observations of pupils in lessons and examination of the work in their books show that they achieve well in lessons and are making consistently good progress in their learning over time in both literacy and mathematics.
- The majority of parents say they are happy with the progress their children are making in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in lessons is good overall, with some outstanding. As a result, pupils are making good progress overall in lessons and over time.
- Relationships between adults and pupils, and pupils and pupils are a strength of the school. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, they cooperate with and listen to their teachers carefully, are eager to answer questions, and work very well together hence good progress is made in lessons.
- Lessons are well organised and the pupils are told clearly what they are going to learn. Great

effort is made to make lessons practical in nature and relevant to real life. However, work done by the pupils on their own is not always set at the right level to meet their different needs and abilities. Also, pupils are not always given the opportunity to work independently, make decisions about their own learning and use their own initiative.

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent because the teachers make learning fun, exciting and challenging. They also use good questioning skills to test pupils' understanding and extend their thinking skills. In one outstanding lesson, pupils were given a set of objects to examine for clues about a character they had to create and describe. Searching questions from the teacher encouraged them to build up a written description of their character. This was very effective and the resulting descriptions were excellent.
- The quality of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because the class has a good variety of resources which are skilfully used by the teacher and support staff to extend the children's thinking and provide them with interest and challenge. For example, in one lesson, as part of the science week, and taking place on 'Archaeological Day', the children were digging in compost to discover shiny shapes that they had to name. This also provided a good link to their mathematics topic on shape.
- The pupils have very good information and communication technology (ICT) skills because they are taught well. Recently acquired iPads were being used to great effect by pupils in Year 2, who were taking photographs and adding text.
- Occasionally, teachers do not take the opportunity to use questioning to assess all the pupils' learning and instead focus questions on one pupil only. Also, occasionally they talk for too long. This tended to slow the pace of the lessons in which it occurred during the inspection.
- Teachers mark pupils' work carefully. However, marking does not always tell pupils how they can improve their work, nor gives them the opportunity to check and improve upon it.
- The teaching assistants and recently appointed learning mentor are deployed very effectively to provide extra help for those pupils who may be falling behind or find some learning difficult. As a result, all pupils make good progress in lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is impeccable. They are polite, helpful and friendly.
- They are happy at school and feel very safe because they feel well cared for by staff and are happy to approach any of them. As one pupil said, 'If we have a problem we just go to a grown-up'.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and the impressive range of extra-curricular clubs helps them to keep fit.
- Lessons are without disruption because the school sets high expectations and the pupils are eager to learn and work well together.
- Pupils from both Key Stages 1 and 2 play happily together on the same playground without a problem. This provides the younger pupils the opportunity to mix with older pupils who are good role models for them, whilst providing older pupils the chance to show responsibility and to care for their younger fellow pupils, which they do very well. The school helps by providing pupils with lots to do on the playground.
- The pupils are adamant that there is no bullying in the school. They have a deep understanding of bullying, its types and causes. They understand about e-safety and cyber bullying because the school has prepared them well. The school has a mobile phone policy that pupils follow.
- The pastoral care and the way in which pupils care for each other is a strength. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and know what is expected of them.
- Attendance has been above the national average for the past three years. The number of pupils who are persistently absent is also much lower than the national average. There have been no exclusions during the past four years.
- Parents and staff agree that the children are safe and happy at school.

The leadership and management are good

- The school has a strong leadership team that knows the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. They have high ambitions for the school and have the determination and drive to bring forward improvements.
- School leaders place a lot of value on the continual improvement in the quality of teaching. The arrangements for performance management of staff and for checking on the quality of teaching and how well the pupils are doing are robust.
- Teachers feel very well supported by the headteacher in accessing training which helps them to continue improving their skills and knowledge. They are very positive about the leadership of the school in general and the part they can play in school improvement.
- The school has a very thorough system for keeping track of pupils' progress. This is used skilfully to identify where the school can do better and results in prompt actions to bring about the necessary improvement. A good example of this is how the school responded to last year's reading standards, particularly for boys, and put in place a number of initiatives to bring about swift improvement.
- They also use this system to identify individual pupils who may be falling behind or having difficulties in their learning. They then carefully plan support for these pupils to help them catch up. The effectiveness of this support is reviewed systematically and teachers have to account for the achievement of the pupils in their class.
- Despite being a small school, all staff share in the responsibility for checking the quality of the teaching and learning in the different subjects.
- The school curriculum is very good. It provides the pupils with a rich experience of learning which they find exciting and fun. In the week of the inspection, the school was holding a science week which pupils were very keen to tell us about. They were also given an opportunity to share what they had learnt with their parents in the end of week assembly.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils have opportunities to reflect in lessons and assemblies have many sporting, cultural and artistic experiences that widen their horizons and make them more rounded individuals. All staff promote equality of opportunity well and all pupils have access to extra-curricular activities.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this school.
- The school meets the government's requirements for safeguarding.
- The school establishes good relationships with parents early in their children's education through a comprehensive and highly effective programme of activities, which introduce children to school life and help them to settle in quickly. Views expressed on the on-line survey Parent View showed that a very large majority of parents who responded are happy with the work of the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is also a strength of the school. Governors take a very keen interest in, and are very well informed about, all aspects of the school's life. They are very knowledgeable about the strengths in teaching and in pupils' achievement. The governing body makes well-thought-out decisions about the school's finances, for example, the use of the pupil premium funding. They ensure that the performance management of the headteacher and teaching staff is carried out rigorously and linked to salary advancement. They play an active part in the life of the school. All governors are linked to a subject and subject leader in the school. In the week of the inspection, the 'science' governor was seen checking on what was going on in that subject. They very much take the initiative; they provide genuine challenge, whilst giving the school their fullest support. They rigorously hold the school to account.

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	119527
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	403394

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	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martyn Butlin
Headteacher	Cathy Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2007
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