

Cuerden Church School, Bamber Bridge

Station Road, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancashire, PR5 6ED

Inspection dates 31 January–1 February 2013

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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher inspire staff and pupils to have 'can do' attitudes. This has led to swift, and continuing, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Good use is made of additional training and development opportunities. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making. As a result, teaching has improved and is good.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points and reach the standards expected for their age at the end of Year 6.
- Pupils develop a good understanding of how letters link to sounds and this helps them to do well with their reading.
- More-able pupils make particularly good progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well.
- Pupils take responsibility for their actions and enjoy being part of the school community. Staff manage behaviour well so that pupils feel safe in school.
- In Key Stage 2, there are exciting learning opportunities and links between subjects.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and, together with other leaders have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils in Key Stage 1 are not given enough opportunities to produce long pieces of writing. Not enough use is made of exciting activities to encourage pupils to write. This means they do not make as much progress, in writing, as they could.
- Work is not always finely matched to some pupils' level of ability.
- Teachers' marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed seven teachers teach 20 lessons and observed small group teaching sessions.
- One lesson was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- The inspectors held meetings with senior staff, groups of pupils, four governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a range of evidence that included: the school's website; pupil assessment information; local authority reports; the school improvement plan and self-evaluation documents. They also evaluated pupils' workbooks and files, school policies and documents, including those relating to the curriculum, behaviour and safeguarding.
- The inspectors considered 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- One of the inspectors met with three parents informally in school and considered 13 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

John Ashley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Allyson Ingall

Additional Inspector

Full report.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children from service families.
- An above average proportion of pupils are supported by school action.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are White British, although the school has a few pupils from Polish backgrounds.
- The school works in partnership with the separately managed nursery, which is located next to the school. This will be inspected, and reported upon, separately.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher took up their posts within the last two and a half years.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 1 by:
 - making use of a wider range of learning experiences to motivate and encourage pupils in their writing
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by :
 - ensuring that staff always plan and deliver work that is carefully matched to all pupils' learning needs, so it is not too hard for some, or too easy for others
 - ensuring that all staff refer to pupils' targets when marking work and give clear feedback to pupils about what they need to do to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Many children enter the school with skills that are below age related expectations. They make good progress during their time at the school and by the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is average.
- In the Reception class, children learn to work well together and listen carefully to staff. They are thoroughly involved in well-planned activities that help them to develop their early writing and reading skills, so they make good progress. However, children still enter Year 1 a little behind other children of a similar age.
- In Year 1, pupils make good progress in their sound and letter recognition. They develop good reading habits and do well in the letters and sounds (phonics) check at the end of the year.
- In Key Stage 1, most pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, although their progress in writing is not as strong. This is because, in some lessons, not enough is done to encourage pupils to practise and extend their writing skills, or to develop interesting sentences. In addition, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of writing.
- At the end of Year 2, pupils' overall attainment is below, but closer to, average standards for their age.
- Progress speeds up in Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics and, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, most have reached the standards expected for their age.
- More-able pupils achieve particularly well in mathematics because they are given challenging work to do and enjoy working independently or with other able peers. For example, in a Year 6 class lesson about division, pupils rose to the challenge of working out how to 'chunk' numbers to find the right answer. They responded well to the good quality advice provided by staff, they knew what they had achieved and what to do next. Consequently, their achievement was good in this lesson.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 regularly practise their reading skills in a range of situations. They are enthusiastic about reading and use books for research, as well as reading for pleasure. They use what they have read in books to improve their own writing.
- During this inspection, Polish pupils were learning about the past tense and how to use it in their writing. They are making good progress in English and mathematics because of the support given by the school and the local authority's English as a second language team.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium support also make good progress. Those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals reach standards of attainment that are in line and sometimes above other pupils, in the school and nationally, bucking the national trend.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and many reach higher than average standards because expectations of them are high and they are well supported by skilled teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The quality of teaching is good, and has improved over the past two years. There is more to do in order to increase the proportion of outstanding teaching.
- Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage deliver a highly organised range of activities. Children respond well to established routines and show initiative and independence in their learning.
- Teaching and support staff usually plan well for individual pupils, especially in reading, where lower-ability pupils receive carefully targeted support from well trained support staff.
- Occasionally, assessment information is not used well enough to set work that meets the needs of pupils of different abilities. As a result, work can be a bit too hard for those who find learning

difficult or not hard enough for those who learn more easily.

- Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning and often write their own lesson plans in partnership with the teacher.
- Teachers check pupils' progress during lessons. For example, in a good mathematics lesson, the teacher changed her original plans to take account of the difficulties pupils were having in their understanding of how to apply division to problem solving. The teacher used questioning well to check pupils' learning and then provided very clear explanations that successfully addressed any misconceptions. Pupils then tackled their division problems with much greater confidence and accuracy.
- Where teachers refer to pupils' targets in their marking, pupils know what is expected of them and make corrections straight away. When marking is less effective, feedback is not related to a particular target and pupils do not always understand precisely what they need to do to improve their work. As a result, opportunities are missed to move pupils on in their learning.
- In Key Stage 2, activities such as drama help to prepare pupils' for writing. For example, in a literacy lesson about the Vikings, Year 3 pupils were required to read together and to act out how a Saxon villager might have greeted an invader. This promoted good speaking and listening and, because pupils were well prepared and excited by their learning, they produced good quality imaginative writing. There are fewer exciting opportunities like this in Key Stage 1, so the younger pupils are not always as motivated to write as they could be.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- Pupils behave well in and around school because of consistently applied routines and expectations. Pupils know the school rules and are encouraged to cooperate. They show an understanding of why rules are important.
- Older pupils are good role models at break times, taking responsibility for jobs such as door monitor, toys' supervisor or supervising the 'quiet benches'.
- Parents feel that the school is a 'caring community' and that 'all staff are accessible and make time to listen'. The school successfully promotes pupils' positive behaviour in all it does. For example, during educational trips, pupils' conduct is frequently praised by members of the public.
- Staff are good at managing pupils whose behaviour can be difficult. The small number of fixed-term exclusions, which have occurred since September 2012, were sensitively handled. Links with the local pupil referral unit supports the school well in meeting the needs of pupils with behavioural needs.
- Attendance is rising and is above average, especially since the school has put restrictions on families taking holidays during term time.
- Pupils feel that they are safe in school and that staff help them to 'sort out their problems in a friendly way'. They respond well to the values of the school and talk knowledgably about the current theme of 'humility'. They understand about issues associated with e-safety, drugs and road safety. They understand the different types of bullying and say that bullying at school is rare.
- There is a strong sense of community, exemplified by an assembly led by the local vicar where all the staff and pupils sang with sensitivity. This was a very good example of the school's attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as the vicar spoke with pupils about the topic of 'fame' and compared modern footballers to people in history who had achieved lasting fame.

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, leadership team, and governors have set out clear plans to make sure that the school continues to build upon the significant improvements that have been made over the past two years. These plans are embraced and robustly implemented by staff.
- There is clear evidence of improvement in the quality of teaching. This is because of the close checks on teaching which lead to the identification of staff training needs. Staff pay is linked with effectiveness in the classroom, and school leaders are quick to challenge any teaching that requires improvement.
- All staff make use of an effective pupil assessment system introduced by the new deputy headteacher. This ensures that staff keep a close check on pupils' progress. The good progress made by different groups of pupils demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities. A great effort is made to ensure that everyone can take part in curricular or school trip experiences.
- The school's improvement plans link very strongly to the school's self-evaluation with a successful emphasis upon improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, particularly in reading and mathematics. The school is aware that more needs to be done to improve the quality of pupils' writing in Key Stage 1.
- The school's curriculum is varied and interesting, especially in Key Stage 2, where it enables pupils to apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in real-life situations. For example, during a recent whole-school Enterprise Week, each class was given £20 and pupils wrote a proposal for its use and worked out the costings involved in their project.
- Links with a school in India help pupils to learn about how people live in other countries.
- The school works very well with parents to ensure that the needs of their children are met. Parents say how grateful they are for the work and care of the headteacher and staff.
- The local authority provides only 'light touch' support to this good school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all current requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have contributed well to improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. This is because they have rewarded good teachers where there is clear evidence of good outcomes for pupils and they have held the school to account where there have been concerns. Governors have received relevant training, for example, in their knowledge of school data. They have appointed a headteacher and deputy headteacher who have great expertise in this aspect of school improvement. The school's finances have been well managed to ensure that all pupils receive the teaching and resources they need. Governors make sure that the pupil premium funding is spent well so that it has a positive impact on improving the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for that funding.

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	133645
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	406541

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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Evans
Headteacher	Carolyn Ranson
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2011
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