

Leigh C of E Junior School

Henrietta Street, Leigh, Lancashire, WN7 1LP

Inspection dates

11–12 April 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good overall progress from their individual starting points and attainment is above average by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding practice. As a result, pupils greatly enjoy learning activities and their achievement has improved significantly since the time of the school's last inspection.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding achieve outstandingly well because of the very good support they are given.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are supported well. Because of this, they make the same good progress as that of other pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They feel extremely safe, they are happy and secure, ready and able to learn and progress successfully. They contribute in many ways to making school a happy place for everyone, including acting as influential school councillors. Their above-average attendance reflects a strong partnership between home and school.
- The headteacher's clear focus on continuous school improvement is shared by all the staff and by well-informed governors. Leaders have successfully brought about improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since the last inspection. They check pupils' progress rigorously and this helps them to plan the next steps in learning effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A very small minority of teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not always ensure that lessons move forward at a quick enough rate to enable pupils to make good progress. The activities provided are not always matched well enough to what the teachers intend them to learn.
- Leaders are yet to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good. Not enough is yet done to share and develop outstanding teaching practice.
- The school development plan does not set out clearly the targets for improving pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons. They also made a number of short visits to lessons. They listened to pupils read in Years 3 and 6 and held discussions with pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, with senior staff and subject leaders, with a group of pupils and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed 43 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and from the outcomes of a survey of parents' views conducted by the school in November 2012. An inspector also met with a group of 10 parents to hear their views about the school.
- Inspectors took into account the views staff expressed in the questionnaires they completed.
- They observed the school's work. They inspected the recorded work in pupils' books and also looked at a wide range of school documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school development plan, records of pupils' current attainment and progress and documents relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Derek Barnes

Additional Inspector

Pamela Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger in size than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British, with English as their home language. A very small minority of pupils, from a range of ethnic backgrounds, speak English as their additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since its previous inspection, the school has achieved the Eco-School Silver Award and the Parent Teacher Association UK Gold Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that it is never less than good and more is outstanding in order to strengthen the drive for excellence in pupils' achievement by:
 - making sure that teaching always enables pupils to progress at a good enough rate in lessons, so that they always learn quickly
 - ensuring that activities in all lessons are always well-planned so that pupils are able to achieve the objective of the lesson
 - continuing to guide improvements in teaching and share excellent teaching practices.
- Ensure that the school's ambitious targets for improving pupils' achievement are set out more clearly and precisely in the school development plan.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- From their individual starting points, pupils make good overall progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Improvements in teaching since the last inspection have helped to speed up progress. A growing number of pupils now make outstanding progress, especially where teaching is outstanding. Effective action has been taken to raise standards in mathematics, which historically lagged behind those in English. As a result, the gap between the two subjects has now closed. Attainment across the school is now above average in English and mathematics.
- School data and inspection evidence shows that this trend of improvement is set to continue. Pupils currently in Year 6 for example, are working well above expected levels for their age in English and mathematics. Even so, pupils' progress is still occasionally held back because a very small minority of teaching requires improvement.
- Pupils' reading skills are developing well as a result of well-targeted teaching of letters and sounds and daily reading sessions. Pupils read widely and give enthusiastic accounts of the many books they have read for themselves or had read to them. Attainment in reading of pupils currently in Year 6 is high; they tackle difficult texts with confidence.
- Pupils' achievement in writing has improved considerably since the last inspection. The work in their books shows that can write for a wide range of purposes; they make good progress in understanding and use of grammar and punctuation; they try hard to include interesting vocabulary to improve their descriptions. A recent whole-school drive to promote good handwriting is having a positive impact. Pupils take a pride in their work and do their best to present it neatly.
- Pupils listen carefully in lessons and always try hard to do their best work. They work together extremely well and productively, with a partner or in a group. In an outstanding literacy lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils collaborated in their groups to build up a detailed picture of the problems being experienced by a character in the story they had been reading. They discussed and reflected on the right thing to do in difficult circumstances and then went on to write high quality letters of advice, to help the character resolve the dilemma she faced in the story.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium make outstanding progress. In 2012, pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal did extremely well in assessments at the end of Year 6, so much so that their attainment was similar to that of other pupils in the school and almost a year ahead of similar pupils nationally. This is the result of the school's careful targeting of pupil premium funds and the positive impact of measures to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the very small minority who speak English as an additional language all make good progress because of the good support and guidance provided for them.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Since the last inspection, teaching has improved. Most teaching is now good and some is outstanding. This is contributing strongly to on-going improvements in pupils' learning and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- For the past two years, pupils have been taught mathematics in smaller groups of similar ability. This well-organised teaching strategy has helped to improve pupils' achievement in this subject and to bring it into line with their good achievement in English.
- Typical features of the good teaching include:
 - well-planned lessons, with activities that interest and engage pupils and that are well-matched to their varying needs and abilities
 - clear explanations, so pupils know what they are expected to learn and to do

- good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants who are often highly skilled, so that all pupils are given the support they need
- effective use of marking, helping pupils to know what they need to do to improve their work.
- Where teaching is outstanding, there is a very high level of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers continually and carefully question their pupils in order to help them develop their ideas and thinking so that their learning moves forward at a rapid rate. In a particularly lively and very well-planned mathematics lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils in a lower-ability set made outstanding progress in grasping a difficult mathematical concept about probability. In an activity, which they described as 'fun, but it really makes you think', they tackled new learning with gusto. By the end of the lesson they were ready to start solving problems using their newly acquired knowledge and skills.
- A very small minority of teaching requires improvement. Not all lessons move along at a brisk enough rate to allow pupils to make good progress and activities are occasionally not planned well enough to help pupils to achieve the intended objectives of the lesson.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour, courtesy and attitudes to learning are exemplary. They feel very secure in school and they are confident that adults are always on hand to help if they have a problem.
- Parents' comments and questionnaire responses show they value the level of care and safety the school provides for their children highly.
- Pupils' understanding of issues around different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, and how it should be dealt with, is impressive. They say that racism is not tolerated in their school and that the staff would not allow bullying because everyone must be treated with respect.
- Pupils readily take on responsibilities in school. For example, play leaders help to make playtimes fun by organising play equipment and encouraging others to join in games and get involved in play.
- Pupils' excellent conduct in lessons is a key factor in their successful learning. They concentrate and apply themselves extremely well, readily share ideas with each other, use resources independently and require only minimal direction in organising themselves in the classroom.
- Pupils with additional learning, health, language or social and emotional needs are supported extremely well. The school's proactive Learning Mentor keeps a sharp focus on removing barriers to learning and improving pupils' achievement and this is helping pupils to do increasingly well in school. The school provides sensitive support for pupils and families whose circumstances might put them at risk. Staff have established effective partnerships with a wide range of agencies that support pupils' well-being. Staff training, including input from the nearby specialist school, is helping to keep everyone's skills and knowledge of best practice up to date.
- Weekly celebration assemblies are very well-attended by parents, who join pupils, staff and governors to look back over the past week. These events serve to underline the school's high expectations for its pupils in all aspects of their school lives. They are seen as a valuable opportunity for everyone to reflect, pray and sing together and everyone joins in enthusiastically. Pupils take a great pride in their own and each other's achievements both in and out of school.
- Pupils' punctuality is excellent and attendance is consistently above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher are driving improvements forward energetically. They have skilfully developed a strong leadership team who now also ably assist with checking on the quality and impact of the school's work. Since the previous inspection pupils' achievement, teaching and the curriculum have all improved, demonstrating the school's capacity for further improvement.

- Since the last inspection, the school has strengthened its systems for assessing, tracking and recording pupils' achievement. Assessments are detailed and accurate. The information gained from regularly reviewing pupils' progress is used well to identify those pupils who may need extra support or more challenge and to help with planning the next steps.
- Leaders make regular and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and its impact on the progress pupils make. Teachers' performance is managed well. Teachers' targets to improve their performance are closely linked with school priorities and there is an extensive programme of staff training. This has led to a significant overall improvement in teaching, of which some practice is now outstanding. Leaders know that their next steps are to ensure that the outstanding elements in teaching are shared among staff even further and to eliminate the small residue of teaching that requires improvement. Actions to improve matters have already begun.
- The school development plan identifies well-chosen actions to enable the school to continue improving. Although staff and leaders demonstrate high expectations for pupils on a day-to-day basis, the plan is not sufficiently precise about the amount of progress the school is aiming for pupils to make.
- The school's creative curriculum brings subjects together into topics that engage pupils' interests well. This helps to make learning fun, especially as many topics include visits to places of interest, and adds to pupils' motivation to learn. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development stems from a curriculum which promotes their awareness of world faiths and cultures extremely effectively. The curriculum is also enriched by visitors to school, by residential trips, by opportunities to develop sporting, artistic and musical skills and by a wide range of well-attended after-school clubs.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a clear and detailed overview of pupils' achievement because they take regular opportunities through the year to examine data on how well pupils are doing.
 - They receive regular reports on the quality of teaching and know what needs to be done to improve it further.
 - Governors ask searching questions because they are well-informed.
 - They manage staff performance effectively. They are fully aware of the link between staff performance and salary progression and use it to inform their decisions about staff pay.
 - They ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent wisely, for example, providing additional teaching assistants, individual or small-group support and enrichment activities. As a result, any barriers to learning are removed successfully and pupils achieve well.
 - Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively, ensuring that safeguarding procedures are managed well and reviewed regularly. They ensure that equal opportunities are promoted vigorously and that discrimination is not tolerated in school.

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	106445
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	405036

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Doublet-Stewart
Headteacher	Stephen Callaghan
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2011
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