

Lancaster Dallas Road Community Primary School

High Street, Lancaster, LA1 1LD

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well as they move through the school, especially in mathematics.
- Standards are above national averages.
- Teaching is good overall. Staff have strong working relationships with pupils and offer them lots of praise and encouragement.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. Most know how to keep safe and they get on well together.
- Senior leaders provide determined and effective leadership, well focused on improving teaching.
- Governors have a good grasp of their role. They challenge the school about the standards achieved and the progress made.
- Parents and carers are very happy with the quality of education and especially with the care provided for their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is too variable. Occasionally, the work set is very similar for all pupils and not hard enough for some.
- At times, teaching assistants are not deployed well enough to provide sufficient challenge for pupils.
- Pupils do not always know their individual targets for what they need to improve.
- Leaders checks of the effectiveness of the school, including pupils' recent work, are not regular or rigorous enough to identify exactly what else needs to be improved.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 27 lessons in the 14 classes in school. Several of these were joint lesson observations with senior staff. Inspectors also listened to individual pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator and learning mentor, and the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. Discussions took place with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 49 parents and carers from the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also reviewed the 49 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a number of documents, including recent data on pupils’ progress, planning and monitoring information and minutes of meetings of the governing body. They also considered in detail records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sue Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Turner

Additional Inspector

Simon Camby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Around 30% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is fractionally above the national average. Most of these pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is half the national average. Currently, this provides additional funding for those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs identified at school action is half the national average. The percentage of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been several changes to the leadership team including new appointments to the role of headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching across the school is consistently good and increasing the proportion that is outstanding by:
 - checking that work is well matched to pupils' skills and consistently challenges those of all abilities
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are active in their support of pupils and are clear about how they can help them improve
 - checking that pupils know and use their targets for how to improve their work.
- Improve the monitoring of the work of the school by ensuring that leaders and managers check regularly and rigorously the progress of all groups of pupils in order to identify what else needs to be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Reception group with unusually wide-ranging skills and early experiences. School records indicate that, overall, these are in line with expectations for their age. Several join as confident and chatty young learners who are keen to come to school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good overall progress and, at times, this is excellent. This is because there is a very well planned range of interesting practical activities that encourage children to find things out and explore. This was seen in their animated discussion about the chicks that were hatching in their classroom, and in exploring sand and water activities related to their 'under the sea' topic.
- Across the school, standards are above average for the age of the pupils. Attainment is particularly strong in mathematics. Overall progress is good and pupils achieve well. While boys have sometimes done slightly better in mathematics, and girls in reading and writing, the school monitors the progress of such groups and, currently, there is little significant difference.
- Many pupils say they particularly like mathematics activities. This was seen when higher attaining pupils in Year 6 made excellent progress in investigating relationships and patterns in 'magic squares' by using algebraic formulae. Pupils became keenly involved in solving these problems and with the teacher's expert subject knowledge, they pushed themselves to achieve more.
- Pupils who are new to speaking English and those who are bilingual achieve well. Should these or any other pupils require additional support this is recognised quickly by the staff and help is provided.
- Pupils of all ages have good speaking and listening skills. Most speak confidently and use an expressive range of vocabulary. Many pupils read well and they are often supported in their reading at home, although reading diaries are not always used effectively to track progress. The school has recently improved the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and records indicate that younger pupils now make better progress than previously in this area.
- Data indicate that standards in writing have previously been weaker than in other subjects. The sample of pupils' recent work shows that they write for a good range of reasons but that this is often untidily presented. Spelling and grammatical errors are not always addressed well enough in teachers' marking, including for the oldest pupils.
- The school rightly identified that, in 2012, while standards were above average, some groups of pupils did not do as well as others. For example pupils here for whom the school received pupil premium funding were approximately six months behind their classmates in mathematics and a year behind them in English. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also made slower progress in writing and sometimes in reading.
- Since this time the school has fully reviewed and extended the programme of targeted support, access to the homework club and enrichment activities and the work of the learning mentor. Current data indicate that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are now achieving well and the gaps between groups of pupils are narrowing more rapidly.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall, although the sample of pupils' work and observations during the inspection indicate that this ranges from outstanding to sometimes requiring improvement. Currently, teaching is consistently effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage and usually good in Key Stage 2.
- The strongest teaching observed was in mathematics and in music, where some teachers' subject knowledge is particularly strong. For example, pupils in Year 5 made excellent progress in mathematics when looking at different ways to solve problems and explain their reasoning. Pupils in Year 4 made excellent progress in music because the specialist teacher made very clear to everyone the difference between two types of musical pattern which the pupils then developed using a range of instruments.
- The special educational needs coordinator and learning mentor work effectively with other staff to check where help is most needed, including for pupils entitled to pupil premium funding. This support is then well focused, with some staff providing one-to-one support at a high level. This is especially for disabled pupils and those who have significant special educational needs.
- The school has a good number of staff to support learning. However, occasionally, time and additional adults are not used effectively. Some support staff do not appear well briefed in how to support learning and sit at the side of activities uninvolved. For example, in an information and communications technology lesson, too much time was spent on explanations and support staff did not prepare computers. This limited the time Year 2 pupils then spent on the task.
- All staff have strong working relationships with pupils and offer them lots of encouragement for their efforts. Teachers often use assessment information well to set linked tasks that challenge pupils of different abilities. The sample of pupils' work though shows that sometimes work is very similar for a whole class and therefore, at times, it is too easy for some and too hard for others.
- Some staff set targets for what the pupils need to improve in their work. Many pupils though have little knowledge of these and are often uncertain about what they need to do to get to the next level in their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in a variety of activities in and around the school. This was shown even when, though quite excited about their Infant Sports Day, younger pupils still behaved well in getting ready and moving to a local field.
- Several parents and carers noted how happy their children are at the school and how well supported they are in their personal development.
- Pupils say they like school and that they get on well together. They recognise that the school's focus on different values helps them think about the impact of their actions on others. They react particularly well to activities such as singing together in assemblies. This was shown in their excellent performances of several familiar songs, which they sang with great joy.
- Pupils say they feel safe and that staff look after them well. They can explain what bullying is and the different types that could occur. They understand that they have to be responsible when

using mobile phones and computers, and that calling others names is not acceptable.

- Attendance is above average. The school encourages regular attendance and punctuality and discourages the taking of holidays in term time.
- While behaviour is good overall it is not outstanding because pupils' attitudes to learning are mixed. At times, some pupils choose not to play a very active part in their own learning. Some do not offer ideas to discussions, are passive in their approach to tasks and do not try as hard as they could with their work. This is shown in pupils' books, many of which show untidy presentation and a lack of pride in their work, including in Year 6.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has successfully ensured that the school maintains its longstanding pastoral strengths in caring for the pupils well, coupled with an increasingly clear focus on improving teaching.
- The headteacher is well supported by the deputy and assistant headteachers. While all senior staff are new to their current roles, they are long-serving in the school and are developing the skills to carry out their new roles effectively. Senior staff have specific responsibilities in different key stages and work with colleagues, including to model to others how to provide effective teaching that meets the specific needs of pupils of different abilities.
- The strong focus on improving teaching has been particularly effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where provision is consistently good or better. This is because there is a strong emphasis on children finding things out for themselves coupled with the use of lots of questions to encourage the children to describe what they are doing and what they think might happen next.
- Pupil premium funding is used increasingly effectively to provide targeted support for specific activities, including attendance at breakfast and homework clubs and enrichment activities. Eligible pupils also work with the learning mentor, particularly those identified as most vulnerable to their circumstances. The support for these pupils has increased this year and is making a positive impact on pupils' self-confidence and their progress.
- Parents and carers are very appreciative of how the school educates and cares for their children. Families from a wide variety of cultures are warmly welcomed in school. Links with the local community are used to help pupils learn more about other cultures. There are strong spiritual and social elements to some activities, such as singing, which are greatly enjoyed by older pupils.
- Senior staff are placing an increasing emphasis on improving teaching. Training activities often take place in school and focus upon identifying the features of effective teaching. Staff occasionally attend courses and also benefit from working with colleagues in this and other schools. The impact of such initiatives though is somewhat mixed because senior leaders do not follow up training activities by systematically checking in the classroom or in pupils' books what improvements have been made.
- The school has an accurate view of its own effectiveness and correctly identifies that provision is no longer outstanding. Joint lesson observations during the inspection showed accurate evaluations of the quality of teaching and areas for improvement. Links with the local authority are effective and the school works with other schools for professional development activities.

- Senior staff use information from data about pupils' progress and lesson observations to decide whether teachers should be paid more. The number of lesson observations undertaken during the school year has not, however, been extensive. A very small number of part-time staff have not yet had their teaching observed since they started at the school.
- Subject leaders are involved in monitoring and evaluation activities, including the scrutiny of work in pupils' books. This analysis has not, however, been regular or rigorous enough to identify and eradicate inconsistencies in teaching and learning.
- Procedures to safeguard pupils meet current requirements. Staff ensure that pupils have equal access to activities and are provided with an interesting range of tasks that bring learning to life, especially for the youngest children. The school actively fosters good relationships and tackles discrimination. Overall with the changes and improvements made, particularly in the last year, the school shows that it has the capacity to continue to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a strong grasp of their roles and are well led. They are firmly committed to and supportive of what is provided for the pupils. Governors accurately recognise and value the many pastoral strengths of the school and the strong links with parents and carers. The school is fortunate to have governors with specific skills and high aspirations for the school. Some have local links with institutions, including the university, which ensures that the governing body is well informed about educational priorities. Minutes of recent meetings show that governors clearly challenge the school, including through discussions of what the data tells them about the progress of different groups of pupils. Governors respond quickly to issues as they arise and take action to ensure that pupils are kept safe at all times. They support the headteacher in managing teachers' performance and pay-related issues. Governors are now actively considering how they can develop their role further to ensure that they are not overly dependent on the headteacher for information.

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	119130
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	412400

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathryn Fox
Headteacher	Rose Starkey
Date of previous school inspection	31 May 2005
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