

# Higher Walton Church of England Primary School

Rosewood Avenue, Higher Walton, Preston, Lancashire, PR5 4FE

**Inspection dates** 11 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 achieve well. They make good progress, often from low starting points, and reach nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the end of Year 6, most pupils have made the progress expected of them. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress has increased in the current year and is now similar to the national picture.
- The progress pupils make and the standards they reach in reading are outstanding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because teaching is carefully matched to their learning needs.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Effective teamwork by teachers and well-trained teaching assistants contribute strongly to pupils' good learning and progress in lessons.
- Pupils are happy, safe and secure in school. Their behaviour is good and they attend regularly.
- The headteacher is an effective and conscientious leader with a clear idea of how the school is doing. She is the driving force behind on-going school improvement.
- Very knowledgeable governors contribute well to implementing improvements.
- Teachers with responsibility for leading subjects are playing an increasing part in helping to check on the quality of teaching and its effect on pupils' progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching to move the school to the next level.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent; this means that pupils do not always get the guidance they need to improve their work.
- There is some unevenness in the progress pupils make in mathematics as they move up from year to year in Key Stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection of this small school took place over one day.
- Inspectors observed nine lessons. They also carried out a 'learning walk' which involved spending short periods of time in a number of lessons. They listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6 and held discussions with pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading.
- Meetings were held with three members of the governing body, with teachers who have responsibility for leading subjects, with a group of pupils and with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed 14 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account the results of a recent survey of parents' views conducted by the school.
- Inspectors took into account the views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they completed.
- Inspectors observed the school's work. They inspected the written work in pupils' books and also looked at a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, records of pupils' current standards and progress, the school development plan and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

## Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Maloney

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools. Year group sizes currently vary from seven to 20 pupils.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes: Reception and Year 1; Year 1 and 2; Year 3 and 4; Year 5 and 6.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. A very small proportion of pupils are from a range of other backgrounds and heritages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is average. (This additional government funding is provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- During the past three years the school has experienced a period of considerable turbulence in staffing, with changes of personnel and several long-term absences of teachers.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, by:
  - ensuring that teachers' marking always gives pupils the guidance they need to improve their work
  - continuing to keep rigorous checks on teaching and to share good practice.
- Implement the school's plans to address gaps in pupils' learning in mathematics in Key Stage 2, so that pupils make consistently good or better progress in this subject in every year group as they move up through the school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children join the Reception class with skills that are below those usually expected for their age. They make good progress. By the end of the school year in Reception most children are working at the expected levels for their age.
- For the past three years, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly average, but improving steadily year by year. In the current year, the proportion reaching the higher level by the end of Year 2 has increased significantly in all of these subjects; it is above average in mathematics and well above in reading.
- Standards have also risen in Key Stage 2 in the current year, following two years of broadly average standards. This can be seen most clearly in the current Year 6 where all of the pupils have reached the nationally expected standard in reading and writing and nearly all have done so in mathematics. The school's records, supported by inspection evidence, show that pupils in this year group have made good or sometimes outstanding progress from their starting points in both English and mathematics.
- The rate of pupils' progress in mathematics during the current year has not been as rapid in Years 3, 4 and 5 as in Year 6, although pupils in these year groups have made good progress in reading and writing. The school has identified gaps in pupils' learning in mathematics resulting from staffing disruption in recent times and plans are in place to address these.
- Standards in writing have risen well over the past three years in both key stages, as a result of a concerted drive by the school. They are now in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils across the school are making good progress in writing and the improvement trend is set to continue.
- Standards in reading have risen impressively in the current year in both key stages. For example, all of the pupils in Year 1 reached the expected standard in this year's national check on phonic skills, which investigates their ability to identify letters and sounds. Pupils across the age-range show a real interest and enjoyment in reading. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, their reading standard is above the expected level for their age.
- The achievement of the small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for pupil premium funding was similar to that of the other pupils in school. By the end of Key Stage 2, their progress compares favourably with the national picture and their attainment is in line with national standards. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress in relation to their abilities and starting points, as a result of the good individual support they are given. All of this reflects the school's work and commitment to ensure equal opportunities for every pupil.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is never less than good and a small proportion is outstanding. This is resulting in on-going improvements in pupils' achievement.
- Good teaching is helping pupils to learn and progress well. Typical features include:
  - well-planned, enjoyable lessons, with activities matched carefully to pupils' learning needs and interests
  - effective explanations of what pupils are expected to do and to learn in the lesson so that they have a clear understanding of how to move their learning forward
  - good attention to timings so that learning moves along at a brisk pace and pupils are fully engaged throughout the lesson
- Very effective teamwork between class teachers and skilled teaching assistants ensures that all pupils are supported appropriately. This is a strength of the school.
- Where teaching is outstanding, teachers often question pupils very skilfully to test out how much

they have understood and make suggestions to help them extend their thinking. This was the case, for example, in a science lesson in the Year 5/6 class. As a result of the excellent guidance they were given, pupils became totally absorbed in their investigations, made their observations carefully and made excellent progress towards their objectives.

- The school has recently revised its marking policy, recognising the need to ensure that pupils are always given clear guidance for improving their work. 'Fix-it' time is being provided in some lessons, so that pupils can review their work and correct errors. This is a new development, however, which has not yet been fully implemented to result in high quality marking and pupil response in all classes and all subjects.
- Effective teaching and a lively curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage enable children to achieve well and to establish the good, positive attitudes to learning that they take with them as they move up through the school.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good and they are polite and considerate. Pupils say they feel safe in school and there is always someone on hand to help them if they have a problem.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and pupils usually apply themselves well to their work. They work together productively, with a partner or in a group. They try hard to present their work neatly. They listen well to instructions from their teachers and they listen to each other's ideas and views and take part in thoughtful discussions.
- Parents' comments and questionnaire responses mainly reflect their appreciation of the school's work. A minority of responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, indicated some parental misgivings about pupils' behaviour and the school's management of behaviour. Inspection findings do not support these views and inspectors found no evidence of poor or badly managed behaviour.
- Pupils have a clear understanding about different types of bullying, including cyber bullying and prejudice-based bullying. They say that bullying happens only occasionally and that staff always deal with it straight away.
- Pupils with additional learning, health, social or emotional needs are included in everything on offer and are supported very well. The school provides extremely sensitive support for pupils and families whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Staff work productively with a range of external agencies to ensure that support is targeted appropriately. The school's detailed records of the success of its work to support pupils with additional needs are of exceptional quality, reflecting a caring and conscientious approach.
- Attendance and punctuality are good, reflecting the strength of the partnership between home and school.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher's very effective leadership has been a key factor in securing the on-going improvements in pupils' achievement and in teaching that have taken place since the last inspection. She has maintained a clear focus on taking the school forward, despite the considerable challenges presented by staffing turbulence in recent times.
- The school's checks on how well it is doing are extremely accurate because they are based on detailed and robust analysis. The well-crafted school development plan sets out appropriate action plans for continued improvement and describes very clearly how their success and impact can be measured through the year.
- Regular checks on pupils' progress are giving clear information about how well everyone is doing; this is enabling staff to identify and support pupils who may be underachieving. The school checks the effect of its support for all of the different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium

and this is helping to ensure their good progress.

- Regular checks are made on the quality and effect of teaching. Teachers with responsibility for leading subjects assist the headteacher in these activities and staff increasingly share good practice and work together. All of this is supported by a comprehensive programme of training and development for all staff, including teaching assistants. As a result, new or temporary staff have been supported well and the good overall quality of teaching has been sustained.
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Subjects are brought together into topics that are interesting and relevant for pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy skills in work across other subjects. In Key Stage 2, a new drive has been started to address identified gaps in pupils' learning in mathematics with a sharper focus on improving their skills in multiplication and calculations. This is set to continue to develop in the year ahead.
- The local authority is providing regular advisory support for the school and this is helping the school to continue to improve.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors share the headteacher's resolve to move the school forward rapidly and to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. The quality of governance has improved since the last inspection and governors now make a strong contribution to school leadership.
  - Guidance from the headteacher and governors' regular reviews of data on pupils' progress give them a clear overview of pupils' performance and of the quality and effect of teaching in the school. This means that they are able to hold the school to account and to ask searching questions from a well-informed standpoint.
  - Governors ensure that performance-management systems are robust and that leaders and staff are set challenging targets linked to pupils' progress and school priorities. They are fully aware of the link between the achievement of these targets and salary progression.
  - Sound financial management and good strategic planning have meant that governors were able to begin an exercise to re-structure and strengthen school leadership this term. A deputy headteacher post has been created in the school and an appointment to the post has been made, which will begin later in the new school year.
  - The governing body gives good support to the headteacher in meeting safeguarding responsibilities, particularly regarding the safety of pupils and staff appointments, and in ensuring that equal opportunities are promoted and discrimination is not tolerated.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119393
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	412050

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	94
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dian Holme
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joy Headley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 335945
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