

Leyland Methodist Infant School

Canberra Road, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 3ET

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well in reading, writing and mathematics with outcomes high compared with national averages.
- Much of the teaching is outstanding and none less than good. Teachers plan work and activities that get the very best out of the pupils. While steps have already been taken to improve further the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics), teaching is not yet consistently outstanding in this aspect of English.
- Children get off to an excellent start in the Reception classes, quickly becoming confident learners. However, the high quality of learning experiences provided for children in classrooms are not as consistently strong in the outside area.
- Pupils' outstanding behaviour is supported by excellent provision for their spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and get on very well together.
- Parents think highly about the school and are very much involved in supporting their children's learning.
- Pupils' attendance is well above the national average.
- The headteacher with the strong support of other leaders and managers leads the school exceptionally well. She has had a highly positive impact on the quality of teaching and levels of pupils' achievement at the school. The strengths identified at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained and built on.
- The governing body provides highly effective support and challenge to the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons. Additional short visits to lessons were carried out to look at issues such as how well pupils get on with their classmates and their overall behaviour.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random, members of the governing body and with senior staff. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about the types of books they enjoy.
- Pupils' current work and assessments were scrutinised, including information which showed the achievement of pupils in English and mathematics based on the school's tracking system.
- Forty nine responses were received regarding the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Inspectors reviewed the inspection questionnaires completed and returned by staff.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Murray

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This infant school is slightly smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is well below 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 who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has achieved many external awards including the Primary Quality Mark in Extended Service provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the quality of learning experiences in the outside area for children in the Reception classes consistently matches the high quality provision found in the classrooms.
- Build on the good steps already taken in making sure the teaching of phonics is consistently outstanding.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children start in the Reception classes with knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for their age. Excellent teaching leads to excellent progress over the year and by the time they enter Year 1, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development is well above that found nationally. As a result, by the time they enter Year 1, over 80% of pupils have reached a good level of development. The focus given to individual children's needs by excellent use made of assessment information is the key to the school success. While there are some excellent examples of the outside area supporting children's learning very well this is not always the case. Learning opportunities inside classrooms are consistently very strong.
- In the national check on Year 1 reading skills in 2012, pupils were below the national average. The school urgently reviewed its teaching of phonics and early reading skills and improved provision. As a result the 2013 national check on reading skills showed that pupils exceeded greatly what was expected. Nevertheless, despite considerable improvements the teaching of phonics is good with some outstanding elements rather than consistently outstanding.
- Inspection evidence shows that pupils reading skills are very good. Those pupils chosen to read to inspectors very confidently read unknown words.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics with attainment being significantly above national averages for a number of years in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence confirms that high standards continue to be the norm.
- Pupils with special educational needs, (there are no disabled pupils currently attending the school), are well supported and make outstanding progress in developing their basic literacy and numeracy skills and are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The most -able pupils make rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics because teachers make very good use of assessment information in ensuring the work that is set is consistently challenging. As a result attainment for this group of pupils is above the national average at the higher levels. In one class, a large group of the most-able pupils accurately and quickly worked out the answers to very challenging numerical problems.
- Additional funding for physical education is not yet available until later in the term. However, there is already a high level of participation in physical education for pupils. These include over-subscribed out of school sporting activities. Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles and discussions held with them demonstrate clearly that they understand the importance of taking part in sport in helping them to improve their physical well-being.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium make rapid progress achieving higher than pupil premium pupils nationally. The attainment of pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 was below that of other pupils in the school in writing and mathematics by about half a year. The school's records show that this is no longer the case and the gap in pupils' attainment is not significant. However, the number of pupils involved was less than 10% of the age group.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Much of the teaching is of a high quality throughout the school. This is evident in the data showing pupils' progress, the work pupils have completed, the school's own record of lesson observations, parents' and pupils' views and in the lessons observed by inspectors.
- The excellent quality of teaching has been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils are supremely confident that, 'their teachers are the very best'. They talk with tremendous enthusiasm about all the new things they are learning. Parents spoken to during the inspection, confirmed by the online questionnaire responses, are very pleased about the quality of teaching their children receive.
- Across the school, the key to pupils' rapid progress is the emphasis given by teachers to the

importance of high quality relationships and high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

Teachers' excellent use of information about how well pupils are learning in different subjects to plan future lessons ensures that any small gaps in pupils' learning are addressed promptly.

- Reading is taught well across the school. This is because teachers have improved their skills in teaching early reading skills and provide sufficient time in lessons for pupils to read. The school is very aware of the need to ensure the teaching of early reading skills needs to be consistently outstanding rather than good. Pupils say they enjoy reading and like funny stories best.
- Pupils are given very good opportunities to extend their writing skills and numeracy skills. For example, following on from a very 'hands on' and highly enjoyable session focusing on learning circus tricks, led by an external provider, pupils were asked to write about their experiences. One child's account, punctuated accurately, started, 'Today was the best day ever! I loved trying the balance boards because they were fun.'
- A great emphasis is placed on not only developing pupils' speaking and listening skills but also on empathising the importance of finding time to really think about what pupils themselves are about to do. This emphasis helps pupils become increasingly confident.
- Pupils' books are marked regularly and marking is of a high quality. Pupils, despite their very young age, have a clear view of what they need to do to improve their own work.
- Teaching assistants play a key role in the outstanding teaching. The work they do, for example in supporting all aspects of learning in the Reception classes and in supporting pupils with special educational needs across the school, is of a high quality.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and enjoy school. Parents who completed the online questionnaire agree with this.
- Pupils are keen to learn and are happy to share their learning with their classmates. For example, Year 2 pupils talk knowledgeably about the famous clown Grimaldi and can explain why clowns could be identified by the way their face paint was arranged.
- Pupils behave exceedingly well. For example, despite the obvious excitement in taking part in circus type activities including balancing and hoop spinning, there were no examples of pupils taking advantage of the situation to act inappropriately.
- A scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection show that behaviour over time is excellent. Isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with well.
- All members of staff are very aware that they must not only meet the academic needs of the pupils but also their personal needs. This they do well and this is an important factor in making sure pupils make rapid progress.
- The school is successful in fostering high quality relationships and there are many opportunities provided in the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have highly positive views on the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils take part in a wide range of activities outside school, including sporting events, choir and guitar tuition, and are very proud of what they achieve. One young child commented, 'I am excited about singing in the choir with my friends.'
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep safe and are very confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. They recognise dangers when using the internet and know how to avoid these problems. Pupils have an excellent understanding of different types of bullying for their age.
- Pupils respond extremely well to the many opportunities provided for them to take on school responsibilities. These include jobs in the classroom and helping around school. At the time of the inspection, the new school council had not been elected but older children were 'hoping to be chosen'. Around the school, pupils are always very willing to help visitors.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Excellent leadership and management by the headteacher, with the strong support of the deputy headteacher and other leaders over a number of years have ensured that pupils receive the best possible education. Everything possible is done to promote the achievement and personal development of pupils in the school's care. As such, the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination exceptionally well.
- The school's own assessment systems provide accurate information. As a result the school has a correct view of itself as an outstanding school.
- Very strong leadership across all areas of the school has a very positive impact on pupils' progress. Senior leaders are very much involved in strategic planning and meetings held during the inspection confirm that there is a firm focus on continuous improvement despite the school doing extremely well.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher carefully monitor teachers' performance, closely linked to the school's areas for development and staff training programme. This has been extremely successful in maintaining high standards and improving aspects of teaching where it is required. Responses to the staff questionnaire and discussions held with staff demonstrate that staff are pleased by the level of support they receive.
- The curriculum provides excellent opportunities for pupils to learn. A walk around the school during an afternoon session by an inspector with the headteacher found pupils to be totally involved in challenging activities in a varied range of subjects. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Pupils have a very good awareness of the importance of respecting others and of helping those less fortunate than they are.
- Parents are very positive about the school and the work the school does with them is highly effective in involving them in their children's education.
- The local authority regards the school as one of a high quality and as such provides 'light touch' support. This includes being involved in the headteacher's performance management reviews. A local authority officer has taken part in paired observations of teaching and learning in the school with the headteacher and regards the headteacher's judgements as accurate.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is expertly led by a very enthusiastic and knowledgeable chairperson. Governors while being very supportive of the school at the same time question and really challenge leaders about how well the school is doing. They know about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements and are confident that what they know points to the school being outstanding. Governors make sure that safeguarding policies and child-protection procedures fully meet statutory requirements. They are well informed about the management of teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, and they review teachers' pay accordingly. They know what the school does to reward good teaching and if necessary to tackle underperformance. Governors are fully aware of the use of pupil premium funding and the results this funding produces.

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	119401
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426281
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Cottingham
Headteacher	Heather Orry
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2009
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