

Emmanuel Holcombe Church of England Primary School

Helmshore Road, Holcombe, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 4PA

Inspection dates 17–18 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Over a three-year period, and particularly in writing and mathematics, achievement has not been as good as it should have been, given pupils' broadly as expected starting points on entry to the school. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been average overall and pupils' progress and attainment, therefore, require improvement.
- Pupils' calculation and investigative skills in mathematics are underdeveloped. In writing, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to talk about their ideas before they put pen to paper. Their progress in this subject suffers as a result.
- Over time, the quality of teaching has not ensured that pupils make good or better progress. The level of challenge in questioning is inconsistent and pupils do not always have enough opportunities to work collaboratively. Similarly, there is sometimes too much teacher direction and pupils are not expected to find things out for themselves.
- Leaders and managers have not introduced strategies to improve teaching and pupils' achievement rapidly enough. Governors support the school but do not analyse pupils' achievement well enough. They do not hold leaders to account with enough rigour.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. As a result, pupils are very proud of their school, their conduct and engagement in lessons are excellent and they enjoy learning.
- The school's involvement in the School Sports Partnership has a positive effect on pupils' health and emotional well-being. A large percentage of pupils take part in sport.
- Parents are delighted with the care, guidance and support their children receive and believe they are safe and happy in school.
- The senior leadership has an accurate view of the school's performance and what it needs to do to move forward. Although it is too early to see the full impact of strategies to promote better achievement, teaching is better and pupils' progress in reading is now good. Pupils in Year 6 are making good progress in writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons or part-lessons, taught by five teachers. Four lesson observations were made jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector attended a whole-school assembly and heard pupils from Years 2 and 6 read.
- The inspector spoke to two groups of pupils, including members of the school council. He also had discussions with the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, support staff, teachers and the senior leadership team.
- He took account of the 43 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and to the responses to the school's internal parental questionnaire. In addition, he spoke informally with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The inspector observed the school in operation and scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and also samples of their work following lesson observations. He also considered a variety of documentation, including internal and external pupils' progress and attainment data, school improvement planning and strategies to enable the school to gain an accurate view of its own performance. He also analysed documentation in relation to attendance, behaviour, child protection and safeguarding.

Inspection team

James Kidd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. There are consistently more girls than boys. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those from service families and those looked after by the local authority) is low.
- Most pupils are White British and no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs, known collectively as 'Peelers,' in recognition of the memorial monument to Sir Robert Peel, which stand on a hill behind the school. It is also an active member of the Small Schools' Association and of the local cluster of schools. Emmanuel Holcombe is a nationally-accredited Healthy School.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has undergone a considerable building and refurbishment programme. There have also been significant staff changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher and the establishment of a deputy headteacher post.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers' questioning consistently requires pupils to think more deeply about the subject matter, thus extending their learning
 - giving pupils more opportunities to work in pairs and in groups in order that they can support each other more in their learning
 - reducing the amount of teacher talk in the classroom, in order to encourage pupils to find more things out for themselves
 - giving pupils more opportunities to discuss their ideas with their classmates before they begin their writing assignments
 - improving pupils' calculation and investigative skills in mathematics.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement by:
 - providing governors with more regular information on pupils' achievement and ensuring that they consider and evaluate trends in pupils' progress and attainment more closely
 - ensuring that the governing body holds the school's leadership to account with more rigour so achievement accelerates at a faster rate.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children's skills and knowledge on entry to the Reception class vary over time, but they are generally in line with the expectations for their age. By the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average overall and has been for the past three years. Given their starting points, therefore, pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- In the Reception class, children's personal, emotional and social development is a strength but for some, their independence in learning is underdeveloped. Nonetheless, they enjoy the opportunities they have to choose activities, both indoors and in the outside area, before they move on to the next stage in learning.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics has been variable over time and standards fell back somewhat in 2013, even though a small minority reached the higher National Curriculum Level 6. Weaknesses in pupils' calculation and investigative skills remain. Nonetheless, data in relation to the current Year 3 and Year 6 groups shows that progress in this subject is beginning to accelerate, albeit slowly. The most able pupils are now making good progress and showing the potential to reach the higher National Curriculum levels.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 are now identifying the important elements of successful writing and talk confidently about 'finger spaces', 'capital letters' and 'full stops.' In Key Stage 2, older pupils are now much more aware of the importance of the correct use of connectives and of '2A' sentences, in which the inclusion of powerful adjectives in stories about internet safety, for example, interest the reader. Although progress in writing is still not as good as it should be, it is also beginning to improve and there are examples in Year 6 of the most able producing writing of Level 5 and approaching Level 6 standard.
- Pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve well in reading. Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) classes and small group sessions in guided reading support weaker readers, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, effectively. As a result, these pupils enjoy reading and read aloud with expression. In Year 2, for example, pupils approached the pronunciation of three-syllable words, 'Trafalgar' for example, with confidence, sounded out the parts of these words and pronounced them correctly.
- Effective support from teaching assistants means that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers overall. There are very few pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium. They attend booster classes and benefit from additional learning resources purchased through the funding. As a result, they reach standards in line with their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is getting better, and most teaching seen during the inspection was good, with no inadequate practice observed, teaching over time has not led to good or better achievement for pupils overall. Teaching, therefore, requires improvement.
- Teachers have secure knowledge of their subjects and plan their lessons in detail. Teachers' assessment of their pupils' progress and attainment has improved since the previous inspection. As a result, activities match pupils' individual learning needs more closely and, through 'Tyler's Tips' and 'Tim's Steps' for example, pupils are now more aware of what they need to do to improve their work and reach their targets in both English and mathematics.
- On occasions, pupils are not given enough time to rehearse their ideas with their 'talk partners' before they begin to complete their writing assignments. In the best lessons, however, in a Year 5/6 literacy lesson for example, pupils are encouraged to discuss their writing assignments with their classmates before they put pen to paper. As a consequence, pupils of all levels of ability produced impressive writing on how to use the internet safety.
- Similarly, the quality of teachers' questioning is inconsistent and does not always extend pupils'

learning by encouraging them to think more deeply about the topics they are studying. In those lessons where questioning requires pupils to justify their ideas, when they are planning a toothbrush advertisement in Years 3/4 for example, they rise to the challenge and produce advertisements which entice possible buyers.

- Too much teacher talk sometimes leads to pupils being over-directed in their learning. When this occurs, pupils are not required to find things out for themselves and miss opportunities to become more independent in their learning. Even when this happens, pupils remain totally focused and concentrate fully on what is being said.
- In all classes, teachers and teaching assistants treat their pupils with the utmost dignity and respect. In classes 1 and 2 for example, which contain Reception children and pupils in Years 1 and 2, pupils are not afraid to make mistakes because they are treated so sensitively and because the adults working with them know exactly how to raise their self-esteem. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well by teaching assistants and also volunteers who help pupils with their reading.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils find it very difficult to make any suggestions about how their school can be improved. When asked which is their favourite aspect of school life they comment, 'Everything!' They are happy in school, feel very safe and believe that their friends and the adults who work with them support them to the full. As they say, 'We are a family here, everyone is kind and we all look after each other.' Their parents agree and add, 'The school can't do enough for us and for our children. Staff are approachable and our children love coming to Emmanuel Holcombe.'
- Pupils behave outstandingly well in lessons and around school. They display excellent attitudes to learning and work independently without reliance on adults. Pupils are extremely well-mannered and are courteous to each other, to the adults who work with them and to visitors. They particularly enjoy taking responsibility as 'weekly helpers' in Key Stage 1 and as play leaders and peer mediators in Key Stage 2. The school council is always willing to offer suggestions about how the school can improve further.
- Pupils have a keen awareness of the different forms bullying can take. They say that bullying is very rare indeed and that if it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. They talk confidently about the dangers of cyber-bullying. They benefit from the wise advice entitled 'Think then Click' which teaches them about how to use the internet safely. The school's involvement in the sports partnership initiative has a most positive impact on their physical and emotional well-being. Sports coaches visit the school twice a week and a high percentage of pupils are involved in a wide variety of team games.
- There are well-attended breakfast and after-school clubs which are popular among pupils, who thoroughly enjoyed making the bird feeders during the inspection.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. Thought-provoking assemblies teach them to respect differences and to be kind and understanding to each other. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and demonstrate their impressive social conscience by their support for a range of charities. They speak highly of the wide variety of extra-curricular visits, to Skipton Castle for example, and all pupils have opportunities to play musical instruments.
- Attendance continues to improve and is above average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Over time, leadership and management have not ensured that pupils make good or better progress, particularly in writing and mathematics, and strategies to promote better teaching and higher rates of achievement have not been introduced rapidly enough.
- However, the committed new headteacher, supported well by the talented deputy headteacher, have an accurate understanding of school performance and of what is needed if pupils'

achievement is to accelerate. They have certainly ensured that arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are better than at the time of the previous inspection and have introduced a range of strategies to improve teaching and to raise attainment in English and mathematics.

- Although it is too early to see the full impact of these strategies, there is no doubt that pupils' achievement in reading is now good and is much better than it was three years ago. Achievement is beginning to improve in writing and also in mathematics, but more slowly in mathematics.
- Teachers are actively involved in improving provision in their particular areas and they, too, are fully aware of what is needed if pupils' progress is to increase. They visit each other's lessons in order to make sure that good classroom practice can be shared across the school. In their words, 'We all learn from and support each other.' Performance appraisal arrangements are increasingly robust and individual teacher targets are rigorous.
- Although the curriculum has not had the required impact on raising pupils' academic achievement, there are some good aspects within it, music, sport and extra-curricular activity, for example. In addition, the outstanding assemblies involve pupils to the full and support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well indeed. The new Primary Sport funding is used effectively to employ sports coaches on a regular basis.
- Safeguarding and child protection policies and practice fully meet current requirements and the school promotes equality of opportunity soundly. All forms of discrimination are rejected.
- The local authority supports the school well, particularly in relation to developing leaders skills and the school's view of its performance. The school also benefits from its membership of the Association of Small Schools and from the joint staff activities within the local cluster.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Over the past three years, governors have not informed themselves well enough about trends in pupils' attainment and progress. As a result, they have not held the senior leadership to account with the requisite rigour. Pupils' progress was discussed at curriculum sub-committee meetings but this arrangement did not lead to a full awareness that pupils' achievement was not good enough.
 - The well-informed Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body are now putting into place strategies to ensure that governors are more informed about school performance. Governors are beginning to have a greater understanding of how the school is attempting to improve teaching and learning. Financial management is secure and governors are fully aware of the impact of pupil premium funding. Governors oversee performance appraisal arrangements and ensure that salary progression is now more closely linked to teachers' classroom targets for pupils' progress.

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	105338
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	426225

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	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Allum
Headteacher	Ellie Lorenzo
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
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