

Nelson St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hibson Road, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 0DZ

Inspection dates 3–4 October 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		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils are not yet making consistently good progress in all lessons because of weaknesses in teaching.
- Teachers spend too long introducing tasks and do not leave enough time for pupils to make good progress. In particular, pupils are not given enough time to write at length.
- Not all teachers manage lessons sufficiently well to cater for the different needs and abilities of all of the pupils.
- Leaders and managers have not yet been successful in ensuring that all teaching is good or better.
- Leaders and managers have not used pupil progress information well enough in teachers' performance management to drive up standards.
- Governors are not clear about the effects of the additional funding allocated to the school for those pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding.

The school has the following strengths

- There is some good and outstanding teaching which results in pupils making good progress and learning well.
- During the past three years, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 have improved.
- Staff look after pupils well and provide effective support for their personal development.
- Pupils behave well and they have positive attitudes to learning. They say they feel safe and that they enjoy school.
- The new headteacher and the leadership team have a good understanding of the strengths of the school.
- All staff and governors are giving full support for actions being taken by the new headteacher. This is helping him to drive forward his ambitions for the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons given by 10 teachers and three teaching assistants. Two observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils about their learning in lessons and their safety in school. Inspectors listened to some pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of Governors and two other governors, school staff and a representative of the local authority. In addition, inspectors looked at the school's review of its performance, its development plan, safeguarding information, school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspectors analysed 18 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors spoke to some parents at the start of the school day and analysed parents' responses to a school questionnaire.
- The views of 15 staff who returned questionnaires were taken into account.

Inspection team

James McGrath, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Ben Cox

Additional Inspector

Faheem Chishti

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is an average-sized primary school. The school population is increasing and additional classes have been added in Reception and Year 1.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national 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 by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. Most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational need is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and Investors in People status.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the last inspection. The headteacher was appointed from the 1 September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or outstanding by:
 - eradicating lessons where teachers talk for too long as this restricts the amount of time available for pupils to do their work
 - developing teachers' planning to meet the different needs and abilities of all pupils
 - making sure that teachers manage their skilled teaching assistants better by giving them more time to support pupils' learning.
- Increase the number of pupils achieving average standards, or better, in writing by:
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to write at length in all subjects
 - ensuring that the quality of pupils' spelling and handwriting is consistently good in all subjects.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - providing opportunities for teachers to share good practice, in order to eradicate teaching that requires improvement
 - using pupil progress information rigorously in teachers' performance management to hold teachers to account
 - ensuring that the governing body checks the impact of pupil premium funding to ensure those eligible are achieving well.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. Supported by good teaching and good opportunities to choose their own activities, they make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with broadly average skills. In the past three years, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 have improved but not consistently in each of the three skills. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were average for those leaving Year 2 in 2013.
- In 2013, pupils at the end of Year 6 made good progress in reading and mathematics. However, too few less able pupils made good progress in writing. The most able pupils in school made the progress expected of them but not more than that. Lesson observation during the inspection showed that the most able pupils are now making better progress.
- School data shows that pupil progress is not consistent year-on-year, owing to inconsistent teaching.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 are average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, too few less able pupils reach average standards in writing. Results from the new grammar, punctuation and spelling test are below average in comparison to the provisional national information. The school's analysis showed that this was due to weaknesses in spelling.
- Pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs make similar progress to others as they move up through the school. This is due to the good, additional support they are receiving.
- In 2013, pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium made similar progress to others. From their lower starting points, the attainment of those eligible for free school meals remained behind others in school. They were two terms behind in reading and writing and three terms behind in mathematics. From 2012 to 2013 gaps in attainment for these pupils did not close in mathematics and widened in reading and writing, but this was due to pupils' different starting points.
- Minority ethnic pupils achieve as well as others and make similar progress, as do those who join the school part way through the year or part way through a key stage.
- The most recent screening test at the end of Year 1 showed that pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds to read words were average. Teaching assistants support reading with small groups of pupils with low reading skills and this is helping them read better. Inspectors listened to readers and found that their skills were broadly average by the start of Year 6 but that they did not read widely. The school knows that the choice of books from the school library is not good and that pupils do not read regularly at home. They have plans to purchase new books and to encourage wider reading and reading at home.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is variable across year groups. Inspectors observed too much teaching that required improvement. Some teaching is good and some outstanding. This lack of consistency leaves teaching requiring improvement.
- On too many occasions teachers spend too long explaining work to the whole class. This means that pupils do not have enough time to complete tasks or write at length. This slows their rate of progress. Also, it means that highly skilled teaching assistants are unable to support individuals or groups with their learning until the explanation has been completed.
- Teachers do not plan their work well enough to get the best out of all of the pupils. For some, the work is not demanding. For others, the challenge is too high and they are unable to make good progress with their work. In these lessons, the least able and the middle ability pupils, in

particular, do not make good progress.

- All teachers mark pupils' work regularly and in detail. In mathematics there are good suggestions for improvement which pupils respond to and they make good progress. In English, teachers' comments are often too detailed and leave some pupils unable to understand what they have to do to improve their work.
- An analysis of pupils' work showed a lack of consistency in the checking of spelling errors and a lack of progress for some pupils in improving their handwriting in subjects other than English.
- Teachers and pupils have good relationships. Teachers praise and reward pupils appropriately. This leads to pupils cooperating well, being highly motivated and striving to do their best.
- Teachers identify pupils' good work during lessons and use it well to challenge others to produce high quality work. Pupils are confident and share their good work and skills. In a Year 1 physical education lesson the teacher used three pupils to show good catching techniques. Others copied their good practice and made good progress.
- In the best lessons teacher explanations are clear and concise; pupils start work swiftly knowing what is to be done; teachers and teaching assistants assess pupils' work regularly and provide good support and advice to help them make good progress; tasks are well-matched to pupils' abilities and what they are learning. As a result, pupils make at least good progress with their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils follow the instructions of their teachers very well and are keen to learn. They are polite and courteous and respond quickly to the requests of adults. They listen well to the views of others and treat each other with dignity and respect. Pupils enjoyed explaining their work to inspectors.
- Around the school pupils are well behaved as they know what is expected of them. They know the consequences if the school rules are broken. Pupils enjoy the rewards they get for good work and good behaviour.
- At lunch and break times, pupils play actively in their very small playgrounds. Behaviour is best when they are given access to play equipment which they use well. The school is a harmonious community and all pupils play well together.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school and that bullying is rare. They are confident that, when bullying is reported, the school takes action.
- Pupils know the various forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know what to do should it occur. They have a good understanding of internet safety and say that the school updates them each term on internet safety through the 'Think U Know' website.
- Pupils show concern for those less fortunate than themselves and readily raise funds for them. They are proud of their work with 'The Bethany Project' which supports children in a Tanzanian village.
- During the past year attendance has been average. During the inspection pupils were punctual to school and their lessons.
- Staff give close attention to pupils' care and welfare and respond quickly and effectively to any whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Pupils say they know they have someone to go to if they have any problems.
- Most parents responding to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) said that their children were safe, enjoyed school and that behaviour is good. Those parents spoken to by inspectors were positive about the school. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about pupils' behaviour in school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The new headteacher has developed a strong sense of purpose within the school and all staff

have been supportive of his suggestions for change and improvement. He has worked with the staff, governors and the local authority to quickly establish an accurate view of the school. He has involved more staff in leadership activity to drive forward his ambitions for the school.

- In the short time since his appointment, he has instigated a review of teaching in the school and has seen all teachers working with pupils. This has helped him create plans for improvement. Teachers have embraced the headteacher's plans and suggestions. As yet, it is too soon to see how these plans are impacting on pupil progress and inspectors observed too much teaching that required improvement.
- Performance management for teachers uses the national teaching standards to identify the skills that teachers need to improve. However, teachers' professional development has not been skilfully planned to improve teaching. It has not used the best teachers to share their skills with others. Performance management is not rigorous as pupil performance information is not used well in order to hold teachers to account and drive up standards.
- Teaching assistants have a performance review system to establish training needs. This is a good example of equality of opportunity. Appropriate training has helped them to give good support to develop pupils' reading skills.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to study a range of subjects and topics. However, the opportunities the school offers are not used well enough to drive up standards in writing. The religious nature of the school and the good opportunities for art and music make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- Pupils speak positively about the range of sporting opportunities available to them. They take part in archery, cricket, netball and other clubs. The school provides swimming lessons. Inspectors observed pupils enjoying their physical education lessons which made a good contribution to physical health and wellbeing. There are plans to strengthen the provision of sport through the new primary sports funding but these have not yet been put in place.
- The local authority has provided good support to the new headteacher. It has helped him to assess the needs of the school very rapidly.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Chair of Governors has a regular meeting with the new headteacher. Other governors say that their engagement with the school is improving. They have received reports that inform them about the work of the school and the quality of teaching but have not been given sufficient information to link pupil progress to the quality of teaching. They understand pupils' progress data but have not challenged the school in the past sufficiently well to drive up standards swiftly enough. They use their skills to check the school's budget and know the proposed plans for new sports funding. Governors have approved the use of pupil premium funding to provide additional support for pupils and to provide a breakfast club, nurture groups and to subsidise residential visits. They have not checked the impact of this support on pupil progress. They understand the arrangements linking teachers' performance to pay. Governors have received safeguarding training and ensure that the school's arrangements meet statutory requirements.

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	119438
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	424600

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	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bill Seed
Headteacher	Stephen Crook
Date of previous school inspection	30 September 2009
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