

Leyland Methodist Junior School

Canberra Road, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 3ET

Inspection dates 16–17 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- The standard of pupils' writing is similar to the national average. Given pupils' starting points, their writing should be better but many do not write often enough or at length.
- The gap in achievement between boys and girls for the more-able writers is too large.
- The standard of pupils' work in some non-core subjects such as geography, history and science is not as high as it should be.
- Teaching is improving but the quality of activities pupils are asked to complete varies which means some tasks extend pupils' thinking and knowledge and some hinder pupils' progress.
- In some lessons, pupils are off-task because the teaching does not engage or enthuse them which means their behaviour deteriorates.
- There are examples of pupils calling each other names because of how they look and using inappropriate language such as 'gay' to mean something derogatory.
- The leadership of subjects needs to be improved so that the leaders have an impact on improving teaching and pupils' achievement in each subject.
- The school does not use the views of parents and carers or pupils to improve itself.

The school has the following strengths

- Governance has improved and is now good.
- Senior leaders are taking effective action to improve teaching through frequent monitoring of lessons and identifying support and development for individual teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Teaching is good in over half of lessons, demonstrated by pupils being engrossed in the exciting activities and making good progress by applying their thinking to practical tasks.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 12 lessons which covered a range of subjects including history, mathematics and English. They also observed provision for pupils at play and lunchtimes.
- They talked to three groups of randomly chosen pupils from Years 4 to 6 to find their opinions of the school. They also spoke to pupils at break times and in lessons.
- The school had no parental surveys to consider as part of the inspection and very few (less than 10) parents and carers completed Ofsted’s online survey (Parent View).
- Inspectors held meetings with three members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority, senior leaders and teachers who lead subjects.
- They looked through samples of pupils’ work from each class to inform their judgements about the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

David Byrne

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This school is larger than average for a primary school and most pupils are White British.
- Around 10% of pupils are supported by the pupil premium (this is a government grant for the school based on the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, any pupils who are looked after by the local authority, and any children with a parent or carer in the armed forces) which is well below average when compared to other schools.
- A slightly lower than average proportion of pupils has been identified by the school as having special educational needs (school action). School action plus and statemented pupils are those who receive specialist help, often external to the school. The proportion of pupils in this group is also slightly lower than the national average. There are a small number of pupils with a known disability.
- No pupils are educated off-site in alternative provision. There is an on-site before- and after-school club which caters for a large number of pupils but this is privately managed and inspected separately.
- The government sets the minimum attainment level that pupils should reach by the end of Year 6 and the minimum progress that they should make, these are called floor standards. The school in 2012 met the attainment floor standard.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of work and activities given to pupils by making sure they extend pupils' skills and knowledge beyond what they already know and can do.
- Raise pupils' attainment in writing and accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - writing more frequently, and at greater length, making sure pupils use their writing skills in other subjects such as geography, history and science and use their skills to write for real purposes
 - making sure teachers demonstrate how to write well and that pupils know what good writing looks like
 - closing the gap in achievement between more-able boys' and girls' writing.
- Enable the teachers who lead subjects to improve the quality of teaching in their subjects.
- Use pupils' and parents' and carers' views frequently to improve what the school does.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In the past, pupils' achievement has been inadequate. In 2013, the results and the performance tables will show a three-year decline in standards in mathematics, a dip in reading and standards that are only average in writing. Parents in the past have been rightly angry at a lack of progress in the four years their children spend at this school. Teachers worked hard to rectify gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge by the end of Year 6 but it was not enough to tackle poor achievement due to weak teaching and too many different teachers in the four years of their time at the school.
- Pupils' achievement, however, has now improved. From the end of Year 2, for example, to the end of Year 4, every pupil has made the expected progress in reading and mathematics and almost every pupil in writing. Standards in Year 4 and Year 6 are high in English and mathematics and pupils are making at least expected progress. Nevertheless, some pupils still have a way to go to catch up for the gaps in their learning and to make good progress; many of these are now in Year 5.
- Pupils read fluently and with confidence in a range of texts. In a Year 3 reading lesson, for example, pupils read with expression taking note of punctuation to help them. They were also able to infer information from the books they were reading about characters, the plot and the setting. Standards in reading are above average with over half of pupils reading at a higher level than expected for their age. The most-able pupils are now achieving well.
- Standards in mathematics are now above average and increasing. In two Year 6 lessons, pupils applied their knowledge and understanding of surface area; three dimensional shapes and their nets; scale; and proportion to create a model of a market place. Pupils were fully engrossed and made good progress in their problem solving and reasoning skills as well as in their mathematical knowledge. In 2013, four pupils successfully attained the highest Level 6 in mathematics; this is an indication that the most-able pupils are now achieving much better.
- Although pupils' writing is now similar to the national expectations for their age it could be much better given their starting points in Year 3. This is because pupils do not write frequently enough; the writing is low level particularly in subjects other than English; they do not write in enough volume and teachers do not always model what a good piece of writing looks like. The gap between girls' and boys' writing closes throughout the school. It starts wide in Year 3 but by Year 6 closes significantly. However, the gap at the higher levels in each year group remains wide which means teachers need to maintain girls' writing at a high level but make sure boys catch up.
- There are not many pupils who are supported by pupil premium money and their attainment fluctuates significantly each year. On average they are approximately two terms behind those who are not supported by the money but this gap narrows as they progress through the school.
- Pupils who are known to have a disability make similar progress to their peers. They are included in all activities and are supported well in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs now make better progress because they are tracked more carefully and targeted teaching is put in place to make sure they make the same progress as other pupils.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Fractured teaching due to long-term absence of teachers replaced by temporary or supply teachers has fragmented pupils' learning. Some year groups have been subjected to a succession of teachers. This situation was also compounded by inadequate teaching in the past, particularly in writing and in mathematics.
- Teaching has improved but there is still some way to go. In the better lessons, pupils are busy throughout the lesson using their skills and knowledge to solve problems, complete research or work collaboratively on a practical piece of work. The activities help them move onto the next

level. In a minority of lessons, pupils are not involved enough which means their progress is hampered, for example, by waiting for their turn to answer a question or to be told to start work. In addition, their progress is slowed because teachers do not model well enough what a good piece of work looks like for them to emulate.

- Teaching is better in reading and mathematics than it is in other subjects such as geography, science, history and 'topic' work. The activities pupils are given to complete in these subjects are too simple and do not match the skills they already have in English and mathematics. In these lessons groups of pupils are given different work but the work is not tailor-made to help pupils to move onto the next stage. In geography and history, for example, there were instances where pupils who could write well were only asked to colour in a worksheet and add a few labels to a picture rather than using their skills to write descriptions and extend their vocabulary.
- The teaching of writing needs to be improved. At the moment, pupils do not write as frequently as they could do; the amount of writing particularly in 'topic' work is not enough, there are far fewer more-able writers who are boys than girls; and teachers do not always model to pupils how to write well and accurately.
- The use and quality of teaching assistants has improved. In the better lessons, the assistants check around the class asking pupils questions to deepen pupils' thinking and understanding. They are used to extend pupils' skills and help them be more independent rather than to do the work for them.
- Teachers monitor pupils well during the lesson and ask good open-ended questions to make pupils think and to explain their reasoning. The new 'fix-it' time at the start of the lesson means pupils are able to respond to teachers' marking and to answer any challenge based on the work in the previous lesson. There is still a difference in quality between teachers' marking: some is helping pupils to move on quickly while others is congratulatory but not helping pupils to improve.
- Teaching at the beginning of Year 3 needs to be improved by having a better system of transition from the infant school so that in the first few days and weeks pupils are building on the skills and knowledge they learnt at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils said they like practical work and subjects such as art, physical education and mathematics. They did not like subjects where the activities were dull and consequently less popular such as religious education, geography and history.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' behaviour was mixed and bore a close relationship with how interesting the activities and teaching were in lessons. In exciting, fast-paced lessons pupils were fully involved, they were engrossed, focused, and helped each other to solve problems, and as a result, they behaved impeccably. In other lessons where teaching was weaker, pupils were off-task, fidgeting and not engaged which hampered their learning and progress.
- In lessons, pupils generally work well together particularly if the collaborative task was enjoyable and interesting. They took turns, negotiated, compromised and learnt how to form a collective view.
- Pupils said that behaviour was generally good but on occasion there was some name-calling because of the colour of someone's hair or because of how they looked. This made pupils upset and affected their learning. Pupils also said occasionally they heard swearing; the use of the word 'gay' as a derogatory term; and occasional racist terms. The school should as a priority update its anti-bullying policy which needs significant improvement and to put into action the recommendations in Ofsted's bullying report, '*No place for bullying*'.
- At break times pupils are well-mannered and polite. However, there is not enough equipment available to use or play with which prevents them from being active.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to be safe. They said the school's work on stranger danger, internet safety, water safety and road safety had all had an impact on them and they knew how to stay safe. Similarly, they have benefited from visiting speakers such as the police

and fire brigade who taught them about how to tackle criminal damage and protect against fire.

- There have been very few exclusions in the last few years; consequently, exclusions are well below the national average.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and there are few differences between the attendance of pupils supported by the pupil premium and those who are not, or between boys and girls.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Since the last inspection the headteacher's passionate and determined leadership has driven improvements in the quality of teaching; pupils' achievement; relationships with the infant school and with parents; teachers' expectations of pupils and professionalism and in the school's policies and procedures. She has an in-depth knowledge of pupils, their backgrounds and their needs which means she is well placed to make sure they get a good deal from their time at the junior school. The speed of improvement has increased since the appointment of the two assistant headteachers, as has the school's ability to improve itself.
- The local authority provided good challenge and support to the school by bringing in expertise from other local schools, a National Leader of Education, using its services to help with personnel, and to stabilise teaching. The role of the local authority has changed from intervening in the school, to supporting it, because it recognises the school has capacity to improve itself.
- Senior leaders make effective use of information from lesson observations, from external reports, from Ofsted and from data about pupils' achievement to evaluate how well it provides for pupils. Two key groups missing from the evaluation are pupils and parents. The school does not survey or formally collect or collate their views which means the scope to improve the school is limited. Senior leaders, for example, do not routinely ask pupils about the quality of lessons, behaviour and types of bullying. This means that they are unaware from pupils' point of view of what to improve to make the school better.
- There is a comprehensive and detailed system in place to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics as they move through the school. This is used frequently as points for discussion with teachers to identify what targeted teaching is needed for groups or individual pupils.
- Until recently, teachers who lead subjects have had little opportunity or training in how to monitor teaching and pupils' achievement in their subject areas. Subject leadership has improved since the previous inspection and there is a basic improvement plan for each subject in place but leaders now need to take action to improve teaching in each of their subject areas.
- Senior leaders observe teaching frequently and monitor pupils' work. Teachers are then provided with clear and small-stepped targets to improve. These are linked to support via training or working alongside other teachers. The lesson observation system is used as a way of improving teaching quickly and is already showing success. It is separate to the formal system of managing performance which has been used successfully to improve the quality of teaching. As such, there is now a strong link between performance and pay but the school quickly needs to establish a policy which clearly identifies how a teacher can move up the pay scale.
- The curriculum as in most schools is in transition ready for the implementation of the new National Curriculum next September. There are opportunities for theme days and weeks such as science week which engage pupils' interest and for pupils to go on trips and visits to deepen their understanding of topics. For example, pupils described how their visit to the Manchester Museum deepened their understanding of ancient Egypt. There is a good range of clubs and activities after school. There are plans in place to spend the government grant for developing school sports (sports' premium) on equipment and resources to use in lessons. It is too early to assess the impact of the grant yet as the money has only just come into school.
- The ethos of the school is to encourage mutual respect and caring. Pupils have time to reflect, time to consider ethical and spiritual issues and learn about different religions and cultures. Most pupils have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Senior leaders are determined to make sure the school is inclusive; for example, they have taken measures to change the building to provide better access for wheelchair users. They make sure

there is equality for all pupils but the school needs to do some work to catch up on its obligations to produce equality objectives and to fully meet the requirements of the Equality Act.

- As a result of spending some of the pupil premium grant on an educational psychologist, the school has been able to diagnose when pupils have special educational needs and identify a programme of teaching and support. As a result, these pupils achieve well.
- Procedures to check on staff qualifications and ability to work with pupils are secure. The safeguarding of pupils is good and a high priority within the school, for example, office staff check diligently to track down any absent pupils and the destinations of pupils when they leave the area to attend another school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is now good and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Governors have a better understanding and oversight of teaching and pupils' achievement. They have a strategic vision for the school which makes better use of other schools in the Methodist partnership and better transition and joint-working with the infant school. Governors are effective in supporting the school, adding value to what it does and in challenging the school to improve. Teachers make presentations to governors about the subjects they lead. In turn, governors are linked with subjects and classes to get a better understanding of what needs to be improved. Governors contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of the school and to taking a lead on some of its improvements.

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	119400
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	427764

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	267
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Matthew Tomlinson
Headteacher	Kathryn Melling
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2012
Telephone number	01772 423694
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