

# Larkholme Primary School

Windermere Avenue, Fleetwood, Lancashire, FY7 8QB

**Inspection dates** 19–20 November 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in both reading and mathematics and outstanding progress in learning to write.
- Teaching is good. Some teaching is outstanding. Teachers make lessons fun. Classrooms hum to the happy sound of pupils enjoying their learning.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school, eager to work hard in lessons and thoughtful towards others.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership expects the very best for every pupil. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are an effective team. All other leaders pull together with commitment.
- The impact of this good leadership is seen in improvements to both teaching and achievement since the last inspection. Methods for checking on teaching and pupils' progress are thorough and effective.
- The governing body knows the school well, provides good support and challenge and is central to the school's continuing improvement.
- A superb range of activities in sport and music makes learning exciting and develop pupils' personal qualities.
- Parents are very supportive. They say the school is friendly and welcoming and feel their children are happy and looked after well.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. Sometimes the match of work to pupils of different abilities is not precise enough.
- In a few lessons, teaching does not ensure that pupils can apply the skills they have been taught confidently and independently, for example when undertaking mathematics investigations.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 teachers teaching in 18 lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly by the headteacher and an inspector.
- The inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books to assess achievement currently and over time and the quality of teachers' marking. Some of this was done jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors spoke to groups of pupils to get their views of, amongst other things, behaviour in school, the responsibilities they take on and the quality of teaching. The inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Inspectors also spoke to some parents as they brought their children to school in the morning.
- Meetings were held with the governing body, teachers and support staff and a telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors looked at a number of documents including the school's own evaluation of its work, the school improvement plan and various policies, for example on behaviour. They looked at safeguarding documents. The inspectors took account of the school's view of the quality of teaching. Together with the headteacher, they looked at the school's tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed the results of the 2013 standards assessment tasks.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at their reading records.

## Inspection team

David Law, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter McKay

Additional Inspector

Faheed Chishti

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Larkholme is an above average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English.
- A below average proportion of pupils is supported at school action because they are disabled or have special educational needs. An above average proportion has a statement of special educational needs or is supported at school action plus.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families or those children who are looked after.
- The school meets the current government floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so more is outstanding and so pupils can make the best possible progress at all times by:
  - making sure that lessons are planned and taught so that learning is consistently pitched at the right level for pupils of different abilities
  - developing teaching methods further to enable pupils to apply the skills they have been taught confidently and independently, particularly when conducting mathematics investigations and using information and communication technology (ICT).

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Since the last inspection, achievement has improved strongly. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 have risen from average levels to above or well above those seen nationally. Achievement in writing is now outstanding.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding generally just below what is typical at this age. They settle comfortably into classroom routines and make good progress to enter Year 1 at levels expected for their age. Bubbles of excitement in one Reception class came from behind masks as children played characters in the 'Gingerbread Man' story.
- Currently, school data, pupils' books and observation of lessons show that good progress continues throughout the school.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils achieve particularly well in writing and mathematics. They confidently use their knowledge of letters and sounds when reading. Standards of attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 were above average in 2013 and well above in writing and mathematics.
- Good progress is evident across Key Stage 2. Pupils' outstanding achievement in writing is seen in excellent compositional skills and the accurate use of grammar and punctuation. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote excellent biographies of Queen Victoria that included perceptive descriptions of her character.
- Pupils at Key Stage 2 read different types of books frequently; they are avid readers and make good progress. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment in reading has shot up from well below to above average standards.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2 to reach above average standards of attainment by the end of Year 6. For example, in one outstanding Year 6 lesson pupils of all abilities showed an excellent grasp of averages.
- The school fosters good relations across all groups of pupils so there is equal opportunity to learn and make progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of timely support from teaching assistants. Pupils for whom English is not their first language make good progress, particularly in learning to read.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals make the same good progress as that of others in the school. Their attainment is in line with that of similar pupils nationally.
- The most-able pupils make good progress because teachers challenge them. By the end of both key stages, the proportions reaching the higher level are generally above those seen nationally.
- Pupils generally use their literacy and numeracy skills well across a range of subjects, for example when they write accurate reports of science experiments. However, in some lessons they do not have sufficient chance to apply their skills independently, for example when solving problems in mathematics or through the use of computers, and consequently these abilities are not consistently developed.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Good teaching engenders good achievement. Examples of outstanding teaching are seen at all key stages.
- Pupils describe their teachers as 'the best of the best'. Positive relations between pupils and teachers exist in all classes and teachers manage behaviour well. This fostering of good relations promotes pupils' social and moral development effectively.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons so pupils acquire very positive attitudes to learning. They become absorbed in what they do because teachers make activities practical and engaging. Teachers expect the very best effort from pupils at all times. For example, in one excellent science lesson in Year 6, pupils were engrossed in making three-dimensional models of

microbes.

- Teachers check pupils' work carefully and track their progress assiduously. In lessons, they adjust teaching to take account of how well pupils are learning. For example, in one Year 2 lesson, some pupils did not understand the idea of digits so the teacher cleverly adapted her methods to explain this. The marking of books is often excellent and shows pupils how they can improve.
- The teaching of reading and writing is a strength across the school and supports pupils' good progress. The teaching of early reading ensures that pupils can use letters and sounds and recognise key words on sight; consequently reading standards have risen at Key Stage 1. Pupils' achievement in writing is strong because teaching ensures that they can write in different styles and use handwriting, spelling and punctuation appropriately.
- Mathematics is taught well. For example in one outstanding Year 1 lesson, challenging and practical activities helped pupils to understand the properties of three-dimensional shapes.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is effective because teachers deploy teaching assistants productively. The most-able pupils make good progress because they are suitably challenged.
- In a few lessons work is not pitched well enough for the range of different abilities and this slows pupils' progress. This applies to all ability groups, including the most-able and least-able.
- Teachers plan and teach interesting lessons in music, science and sport, so pupils get a good quality experience across different subjects. However, in some lessons teaching does not give enough opportunity for pupils to apply their skills independently, for example by conducting investigations in mathematics, using computer skills or independently following through research in history and geography.
- The work in pupils' books and senior leaders' monitoring records show that teaching over time is of good quality. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and this has pushed up achievement.

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

- Pupils are eager to get into lessons because they love learning. In classrooms, pupils often display exemplary behaviour. They always try their very best, co-operate exceptionally well and are eager to be helpful. These exceptionally positive attitudes enable pupils to achieve well.
- The school has a friendly, welcoming ethos. Pupils are considerate, polite and keen to take responsibility, for example as prefects or school councillors. They take great pride in their school and at lunchtimes and playtimes an orderly atmosphere prevails.
- Pupils feel totally safe in school. They learn about how to keep safe through an excellent programme of personal and social education. The quality of care provided by staff is excellent.
- Bullying is rare and pupils understand how to recognise and deal with bullying should they ever experience it, because such issues are covered effectively in lessons. Behaviour has improved since the last inspection; then it was good and now it is outstanding. There have been no exclusions in the last two years.
- Attendance is above average and there is little persistent absence. The school has excellent methods to deal with absence and it has reduced in the last three years.

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

- The headteacher provides an unfaltering drive to raise achievement and improve teaching. She is effectively supported by the deputy headteacher. Their ambition has been central to the recent improvements.
- Robust methods for checking on the quality of teaching and for tracking the progress of pupils serve to improve teaching. Leaders at all levels check pupils' books, track their progress and report their evaluations to the governing body. Priorities for improvement are agreed by

everyone and further actions are carefully planned.

- Leaders organise relevant training for teachers and teacher appraisal is effective. Regular meetings to check pupils' progress take account of how well each teacher is contributing so performance is managed well.
- Leaders ensure that teachers plan worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures. They make sure that good relations are fostered throughout the school and with parents. This promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Leaders are ambitious to provide an exciting education through a range of sport, music and interesting activities. For example in one class pupils dressed in Roman costumes and paraded proudly around the school. However, pupils' abilities to apply skills across different subjects, for example using mathematics skills to investigate issues in science or geography, are not always consistently developed. This is recognised by school leaders and is included for development in the school's improvement plan.
- The pupil-premium funding is used well to provide additional teaching and consequently these pupils make good progress. Primary School Sport funding is used effectively to secure further activities from specialist providers and school leaders have a clear plan to monitor the impact of this.
- School leaders and governors value the support of the local authority, for example from the school adviser.
- Good leadership and governance have made a strong impact since the last inspection and as a result, achievement and behaviour are now better. Leaders have improved teaching too, by moving it from satisfactory to good, but not enough is yet consistently outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors want every pupil to receive the best possible education. The governing body is led well by an astute chair. All governors know the school well and are kept well-informed by school leaders. They make sure that teacher appraisal, including the performance of the headteacher, is managed effectively and that any pay awards are merited. They use funding well, for example pupil-premium money to improve achievement. They make sure that safeguarding requirements are met.

## 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>	119299
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	426142

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	273
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Norman Irish
<b>Headteacher</b>	Val Pilkington-Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 874024
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	head@larkholme.lancs.sch.uk



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