

Scarisbrick St Mark's Church of England Primary School

Southport Road, Scarisbrick, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L40 9RE

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. Pupils make particularly good progress in learning to read and many acquire a love of books. They usually reach standards that are above, and sometimes well above, the national average.
- Teaching is good. Some teaching is outstanding. Teachers make lessons interesting so pupils enjoy learning.
- Behaviour is good and often outstanding in lessons. Pupils are eager to take responsibility and are proud of their school.
- The headteacher's good leadership expects the very best for all pupils. Teachers make a good contribution to leadership by taking responsibility for key areas of the school's work. All staff work together to do the best they can for every pupil.
- The school has improved since the last inspection. Pupils make better progress in reading and writing. Relevant training has improved teaching so it is good in all classes. This shows the impact of good leadership over time. Methods for checking on the quality of teaching and for tracking the progress of pupils are thorough and robust.
- Governors know the school well because they are regular visitors and some help with after-school clubs. Governors provide good challenge and support.
- Pupils are keen to participate in sport. The school makes a wide range of activities available. This contributes strongly to pupils' personal development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding. In a few lessons, the pace of learning slows when teachers' introductions are over-long. At times, work is not pitched at the right level.
- Pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as strong as in English, particularly for girls and the least able. The teaching of mental calculation is not always effective and some pupils are not sufficiently able to apply their skills to problem solving.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed three teachers teaching in 10 lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly by the headteacher and the inspector.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books to assess achievement currently and over time and the quality of marking. Some of this was done jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke to groups of pupils to get their views of, among other things, behaviour in school and the quality of teaching. The inspector took account of 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector also spoke to seven parents who were helping in school, and to three parents following the school's carol singing at the local church.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, teachers and support staff and with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector 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. The inspector looked at safeguarding documents and took account of the school's view of the quality of teaching. Together with the headteacher, the inspector looked at the school's tracking of pupils' progress. The inspector analysed the results of the 2013 standard assessment tasks.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at their reading records.

Inspection team

David Law, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The number of pupils at St Mark's is well below that of the average-size primary school. All three classes have a mix of year groups; in some year groups there are fewer than 10 pupils. Excluding the headteacher, two of the three class teachers started at the school this term. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. There are no pupils whose first language is not English.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action because they are disabled or have special educational needs. An above-average proportion have a statement of special educational needs or are supported at school action plus.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is well below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families or children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils leaving or joining the school in any one year is much higher than is typically seen.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so more is outstanding in order to raise pupils' achievement to the best it can be at all times by:
 - making sure teachers' introductions to lessons and their explanations are not too lengthy so there is always a brisk pace to pupils' learning
 - planning and teaching lessons in which the pitch of work is secure and consistently at the right level for pupils of all abilities
 - improving methods for the teaching of mental calculation and problem solving so that all pupils, but particularly girls and the least able, gain confidence in applying mathematical skills and knowledge.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding in line with what is typical at this age. They quickly learn to follow class routines and make good progress. On entering Year 1, most have acquired a good level of development. Children were enthralled in one lesson when story characters jumped out of a magic box when they waved a wand over it.
- Currently, pupils' books, observation of lessons and school data show that pupils make good progress across the school.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils' achievement in reading and writing is good. They make good progress in learning how to use letters and sounds (phonics). Reading and writing have improved since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in reading improved in the 2013 assessments at the end of Year 2. Pupils are keen to take books home.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in mathematics lessons currently. In one lesson, Year 2 pupils gained a good grasp of division, for example. However, over time achievement in mathematics is less strong than in reading and writing.
- Good progress is seen across Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, overall standards of attainment are usually above national levels; in most years following the last inspection, they are well above in English.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils gain a love of books. One pupil said, 'I really like my books because I can imagine the story in my head.' Pupils achieve well in reading and writing. In one outstanding lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils made rapid progress in constructing complex sentences.
- Standards of attainment in mathematics were above average in 2012 but dipped to below average in 2013. In lessons currently, pupils make good progress in mathematics. However, scrutiny of pupils' books and school data show that too many pupils are not confident in mental calculation strategies or able to use mathematical skills and knowledge sufficiently well when solving problems. This particularly affects the least-able pupils and some girls.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because teaching assistants skilfully support their learning. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. At the end of Year 6 in 2013, an above-average proportion of pupils reached the highest level in national tests (Level 6) in both reading and mathematics.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals make the same good progress in both English and mathematics as those not eligible for free school meals because the pupil premium funding has provided good support. Although the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is very small, these pupils attain far better than similar pupils nationally, being about three terms ahead.
- School leaders and teachers foster good relations across all groups of pupils so discrimination is tackled and there is equal opportunity to make progress.
- Pupils make good use of their literacy skills across different subjects. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 wrote about Ancient Greece in their history books. Mathematical skills are used in science, which pupils enjoy, but the application of such skills is not always effective.

The quality of teaching

is good

- There is good teaching in all classes; this fosters good relations and underpins pupils' current good achievement. Teachers skilfully manage behaviour and successfully promote pupils' social and moral development.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive: they work well with others, show persistence and try

their very best. This is because teachers plan interesting lessons that pupils enjoy, explain things clearly and use probing questions to check pupils' understanding. For example, Year 4 pupils confidently computed division because the teacher had explained strategies carefully so they knew exactly what to do.

- The good-quality marking of pupils' books shows them how to improve. Teaching is adjusted in lessons as careful checks are made on how well pupils understand. Records of pupils' achievement in reading are assiduously maintained, particularly for the youngest pupils, and the information is used well to plan future teaching.
- The teaching of reading and writing is good. Pupils are taught how to use the library and teachers ensure they read frequently across a range of books. Letters and sounds are taught particularly well in Reception and Year 1, often through imaginative role play. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 acquire a good ability to write at length for different purposes.
- The teaching of mathematics is good overall. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils gained a good understanding of perimeter and area when they undertook practical activities. However, the teaching of mental calculation skills is not always effective because some groups of pupils, particularly girls and the least able, cannot confidently use their skills to solve problems.
- Lessons are well organised and groups of pupils are effectively supported by teaching assistants, particularly in Reception and Year 1. In some lessons, however, teachers spend too long explaining things and a few pupils begin to lose interest. Work is usually set at the right level but sometimes is not pitched precisely enough to meet the range of needs, for example for the least able in mathematics. In contrast, the most-able pupils are challenged and make good progress.
- Teachers plan and teach interesting lessons in history and science. For example, pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 were enthralled to learn that Roman soldiers received parcels of underpants from their mothers when serving in the cold northern lands around Chester!
- Senior leaders' monitoring and the quality of work in pupils' books show that teaching over time is of good quality and this has contributed to the rise in achievement since the last inspection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and often outstanding. Pupils are very considerate of others' needs and polite and welcoming to visitors. They are keen to learn; in a few lessons, however, some pupils lose interest when introductions go on too long.
- Pupils are eager to help around school. They proudly serve on the school council, become team captains or take on responsibility as prefects. At lunchtime and playtimes, older pupils love to help younger ones and a calm and orderly atmosphere prevails.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. High levels of care are provided by all staff. Lessons are planned for pupils to learn about safety issues, for example when using computers; because of this, they have a good understanding of how to keep safe online.
- School records show that bullying is very infrequent. Pupils say there is very little bullying and if disagreements arise, they are sorted out because 'pupils talk it through and shake hands to make up.' A good personal and social education programme helps pupils to understand different types of bullying and, consequently, they show a good grasp of these issues. Some parents said the school deals well with any bullying and felt it to be rare. In responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), other parents felt that the school does not deal effectively with bullying.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils are eager to get into lessons because they enjoy learning. There have been no exclusions recently.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is ambitious for all pupils to achieve well. Her high expectations are shared by staff and governors. Teachers take on leadership responsibility confidently and the leadership of mathematics has been particularly effective in identifying precisely what pupils need to improve.
- Methods for checking on the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching are systematic and robust. Leaders observe lessons regularly and pupils' books are scrutinised carefully. The tracking of pupils' progress is thorough; prompt action is taken if any pupil falls behind.
- The appraisal of teaching is effective; all teachers have objectives for improvement. Good-quality induction for new staff, and further training, are appropriately linked to the school's priorities.
- School leaders ensure that pupils have valuable opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Links with the church are strong, for example pupils sang beautifully in church to celebrate Christmas. Links with a school serving a diverse inner-city community and support for children in Africa enable pupils to learn about other places and cultures.
- School leaders and governors make learning exciting and interesting. Parents are particularly grateful for the wide range of clubs available. Pupils love sport, are proud of their success in team games and are enthusiastic dancers.
- The Primary School Sport funding is used well to provide additional activities from specialist providers. Levels of participation and pupils' attitudes towards living healthily are improving as a result. The pupil premium funding has boosted the progress of those in receipt of free school meals and they now achieve as well as other pupils in the school, so the gap has closed to zero.
- School leaders and governors value the support of the local authority, for example through the school's adviser.
- Good leadership and governance have made a firm impact on raising achievement since the last inspection. Recent appointments and changes to teaching staff have been managed well by the headteacher and governors to ensure good-quality teaching is maintained.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors want the best for every pupil. They value the headteacher's reports because they help them to understand pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. However, governors do not take this at face value and are careful to evaluate things for themselves by talking to subject leaders and asking challenging questions. They ensure that the management of teacher performance, including the performance of the headteacher, is effective and that pay is merited. Governors pride themselves on making sure safeguarding requirements are met. They use funding astutely to improve teaching, for example the pupil premium money which has raised achievement.

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	119410
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426258

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	59
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Michael
Headteacher	Marilyn Freeman
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2008
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