

St Peter's CofE Primary School

Cartmel Avenue, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 0NW

Inspection dates

11–12 December 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| 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. From their low starting points pupils make good progress and by the time they leave Year 6 attainment is close to the national average.
- Improvements since the last inspection have increased children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress in the Reception class is now good.
- Teaching is consistently good and standards of attainment are rising. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make lessons interesting. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and display positive attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and welcoming and the caring environment in the school helps pupils to work and play well together. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. In particular, pupils show great respect for different cultures and beliefs.
- The executive headteacher and associate headteacher work very well together and, along with other staff and governors, have created a strong sense of community within the school. As a result, achievement and teaching are improving. The school is moving forward at a good pace.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is only occasionally outstanding. Sometimes, particularly when pupils are all working together, activities are too hard for some pupils but not hard enough for others.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most-able pupils to do their very best.
- Pupils do not check and evaluate their work often enough. They answer teachers' questions readily but do not ask enough questions of their own.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or parts of lessons, of which one was a joint observation with the executive headteacher and one with the associate headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading in Key Stage 1 and held meetings with pupils drawn from across Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Meetings were held with the executive and associate headteacher and other leaders, including subject and phase leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors met with a group of governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors undertook a scrutiny of pupils' current work.
- A range of other evidence was also considered by inspectors. This included the school's evaluation of its own performance, development planning, performance management objectives for teachers, data about the achievement of pupils across the school, minutes of meetings of the governing body and its committees and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- There was insufficient response to gain information from parents through the online questionnaire (Parent View). A small number of parents shared their views of the school with inspectors during the inspection and inspectors examined the results of the school's own recent parental survey.
- Inspectors analysed 24 returns by staff to the inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Bardon

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, as is the number of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher, whose time is shared with another local school as part of a supportive collaboration, and an associate headteacher, who is based solely in the school.
- The school has achieved a number of awards in recent years, including the Eco-Schools Green Flag and the local authority's Step into Quality Early Years Award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and thereby raise the rate of pupils' progress by:
 - making sure that throughout the lesson work is matched accurately to pupils' levels of ability
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils are always challenged to make as much progress as possible
 - improving pupils' independent working skills by ensuring they take more responsibility for checking and evaluating their own work
 - ensuring that pupils contribute fully in every lesson by asking questions and offering their own ideas and opinions.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age, especially in communication and language. A strong focus on developing children's skills in these weaker areas has ensured that children's progress in Reception class has improved and is now good. As a result, attainment is rising and an increasing number of children now reach the level expected by time they move into Year 1.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is good. Although attainment over time has been below average, it has improved year-on-year and the vast majority of pupils make at least the expected progress across the key stage. Rising achievement in Reception class is now having a positive impact on current levels of attainment in Years 1 and 2, where a larger proportion of pupils are now working at or above the level expected for their age.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 is rising closer to average although there are some variations because of the relatively small cohort sizes. This represents good progress from individual starting points across Key Stage 2. Although increasing, only a few pupils exceed the level expected for their age especially in reading and writing.
- Pupils make good progress in reading in response to effective teaching. The school has successfully put in place a structured approach to teaching phonics (letters and the sounds that they make). As a result, pupils in Year 2 make good use of their knowledge of phonics to help them decode new words. Older pupils grow in confidence and enjoy reading. They make good use of the well-stocked library areas and a good range of reading books.
- Pupils' written work is improving. Work in pupils' books shows that teachers make it clear to pupils how writing changes for different purposes. As a result, they understand how to write in a variety of styles and many older pupils are beginning to use complex sentences effectively. Clear writing targets help pupils to know the next steps that they need to take although on occasions teachers' expectations for the more-able pupils are not high enough.
- Achievement in mathematics is good. Pupils in most classes solve problems confidently and use their basic numeracy skills well. Teachers extend pupils' skills by providing opportunities to them in other areas of the curriculum, such as in an outstanding Year 4 science lesson in which pupils had to make and record accurate measurements. More-able pupils do not always move on fast enough to apply their skills to solve harder problems.
- Overall, the more-able pupils make good progress by the time they leave school but this varies between classes and when work fails to challenge them they do not make enough progress and not all reach the above average levels.
- There is no significant difference between the achievement and progress of those in receipt of the pupil premium and other pupils. This group includes those known to be eligible for free school meals and sometimes their attainment is slightly above that of other pupils in English and mathematics. This is because they are supported effectively in school.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled and those with special educational needs, those from minority ethnic groups and those with a first language other than English, achieve well. Their needs are met by effective support from teaching assistants, who help them to make good progress. This is indicative of the school's effective promotion of equal opportunities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and some examples of outstanding teaching were observed. This enables pupils to make good progress.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a good balance of activities led by adults and ones that the children choose themselves. Staff encourage children to develop their language and communication skills and very effectively target focused activities to meet individual children's needs. As a result, the progress that children make is improving and is now good. The outdoor

area is used imaginatively to enhance children's learning further.

- Across Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons that build well on what pupils already know, enabling them to make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.
- The very best lessons go at a brisk pace, with teachers setting a range of activities that allow pupils to practise their skills and help teachers to assess progress accurately. High expectations are evident, such as in an excellent Year 2 lesson where pupils were challenged to use a broad range of adjectives and alliteration in a piece of descriptive writing. On other occasions expectations for the more-able pupils are not high enough and they could achieve more.
- Teachers use questions skilfully to encourage pupils to explain their thinking. However, pupils are not always confident in asking questions themselves and do not consistently offer their own ideas.
- In most lessons activities are matched accurately to pupils' different abilities, particularly in the main part of the lesson when pupils are working in smaller groups either on their own or supported by a teacher or teaching assistant. Sometimes, when pupils are all working together, the work is not matched as closely to need and is too easy for some pupils or too hard for others. This causes the pace of learning to slow.
- Teachers' marking is good. It provides pupils with clear information about how to improve their work, and pupils respond well to these comments. At times, older pupils fail to become independent by evaluating their work and seeing how they can make it better. They do not always take the time to check and correct their own work and so learn from their mistakes.
- Reading is taught well, starting with the successful teaching of phonics. Regular 15-minute slots for practising key aspects of literacy and numeracy are helping pupils to improve their basic skills. Further support is provided through carefully planned and targeted intervention groups which are led effectively by teaching assistants.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- Behaviour around school is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They report that they feel safe in school and that unacceptable behaviour is very rare because 'this is a kind school'. A very large majority of parents agree with this view.
- At playtimes and lunchtimes pupils mix well and get on with each other. The playgrounds provide attractive spaces for them to play, and they like using extra games equipment such as skipping ropes and bats and balls. Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility for looking after and playing with younger pupils.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They say that in school they 'work hard and learn a lot'. Although consistently good, attitudes in lessons are not outstanding because where teaching is less engaging, pupils become too passive and a few lose concentration. This slows their learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including name-calling and cyber-bullying, but say that instances of bullying in school are extremely rare. Displays of pupils work linked to internet safety effectively reinforce the message to pupils about keeping themselves safe online.
- The school runs a range of nurture activities, including an afternoon group and breakfast provision. These provide very effective support for a number of identified pupils, developing their social skills and confidence.
- Attendance is steadily improving but, despite the school's best efforts, is still typically just below average. The level of persistent absence is broadly average. The majority of pupils attend school regularly and on time. Many absences can be explained and are for a range of different reasons, although a small minority of pupils have more absence than is normal. These are followed up rigorously by the school.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and associate headteacher provide clear direction for the school. Along with effective phase and subject leaders, they have created a very positive atmosphere throughout the school and have been successful in securing improvements in teaching and achievement, such as in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While the impact of these improvements has not yet been seen in the end of key stage results, the school now has a firm base to build on.
- School leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and where it could do better. The school improvement plan is based on robust self-evaluation and correctly identifies the key priorities for improvement. Pupils' attainment and progress are tracked accurately and the information used effectively to target intervention support where it is most needed. The impact is clear in the good progress of most pupils although there is some inconsistency in the progress of the more able in different classes.
- Effective systems are in place to check on the quality of teaching. Both the executive headteacher and associate headteacher are skilled in identifying strengths in teaching and areas where it may be improved. As a result, teaching is improving and is now consistently good although a few aspects need attention to raise the overall quality of teaching to the next level.
- Performance management arrangements are effective. They ensure that there is a clear link between teachers' pay progression and pupils' progress.
- The curriculum is well organised and provides pupils with a broad range of learning activities, which are enhanced well with a range of interesting educational visits, such as to Jorvik Viking Centre and the Manchester Jewish Museum. Information and communication technology is used widely to support curriculum activities, for example in recording pupils' dances in a Year 6 physical education lesson and in capturing photographs of sculpture work in the style of Andy Goldsworthy that pupils had produced.
- The school has used the additional sports funding to provide specialist coaches to work alongside teachers, enhancing the variety of sports and games covered in lessons and clubs. This has helped to increase pupils' enjoyment and engagement in sport.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. An annual residential trip to London gives pupils the opportunity to experience live musicals, such as *Wicked*, in the West End; pupils also take part in activities to celebrate different religious festivals, such as Harvest and Eid, and to raise money for charity.
- The school works well with the local authority, and the partnership with another local school has been successful in giving school leaders the chance to take on new responsibilities and further develop their skills.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's context, strengths and areas for development. They review data on pupils' progress and attainment and are becoming increasingly effective at holding school leaders to account for pupils' progress.
 - Links to individual classes ensure that governors are aware of the overall quality of teaching and any aspects that need attention. These links also allow governors to become involved in school activities, such as joining their classes to work with a visiting graffiti artist on a school mural.
 - Governors understand how pupil premium funding is used and receive information about the impact that it is having on the progress of these pupils. They carefully monitor the school's finances and ensure that the statutory duties of the governing body are fulfilled, particularly around safeguarding.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 119386 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 426310 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 5–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 173 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Lawrence Carson-Featham |
| Headteacher | Joan Smith |
| Date of previous school inspection | 2 March 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01254 233513 |
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