

Overton St Helen's Church of England Primary School

Lancaster Road, Overton, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA3 3EZ

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics in both key stages is good. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, their attainment is above that found nationally.
- Pupils achieve particularly well in reading and mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and are well prepared for Key Stage 1.
- Across the school, the quality of teaching is good and leads to good achievement.
- The school is a happy and secure community. Pupils enjoy school; they behave well and feel safe. Attendance is above average.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide good leadership. As a result, they have brought the staff team together and driven forward improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The governors provide a good level of challenge and support to the headteacher and managers. They recognise the school's successes, know how well the pupils are doing, and are ambitious for further improvements in the future.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to do well. They thoroughly enjoy the 'Forest School' a woodland area where they can learn effectively outdoors.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 2 is not as fast as that seen in reading and mathematics.
- The quality of teachers' marking and feedback varies between subjects and classes.
- Middle leaders' checks on the quality of teaching and learning are not always sharply focused on the progress that pupils are making, especially in writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons or parts of lessons, of which two were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors made a number of shorter visits to other lessons. Inspectors also listened to pupils read and scrutinised work in their books.
- Meetings were held with two different groups of pupils of all ages and from a range of different backgrounds. Inspectors held informal discussions with other pupils.
- Inspectors also held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, two other governors, senior leaders and the local authority representative who works with the school.
- Inspectors looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the performance management of staff, the tracking and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, records on attendance, behaviour and safety and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. They looked at the effect of the school's use of the pupil premium funding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 20 parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and also the school's own survey as well as meeting parents at the starts of the school day. Inspectors scrutinised 16 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Zahid Aziz, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Prydwen Elfed-Owens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Overton St Helen's Church of England Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is below 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). At this school, all the pupils eligible for the pupil premium are those known to be eligible for free school meals and this proportion is below the national average.
- Most classes are combined year groups.
- The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
 - making sure that activities set for all pupils are always at the right level of difficulty
 - increasing opportunities for pupils, particularly boys, to learn by finding things out for themselves
 - ensuring the quality of feedback about pupils' written work, including homework, is always sharply focused on next steps in learning.
- Improve further pupils' progress in writing by:
 - increasing the rate at which pupils learn in writing so that this is at least as good as in reading and mathematics
 - ensuring that pupils' writing skills are developed in a systematic manner as pupils move through the school such as through extended pieces of writing and using longer sentences
 - developing the skills of middle leaders to help them to check progress, including through external partners.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good. As they move up through the school, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and, by the end of Year 6, reach standards of attainment that are above average.
- When children start in Reception, their skills are below those expected for their age, especially in literacy. They make good progress, particularly in literacy and personal development, and are well prepared for their start in Year 1.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils continue to do well because teaching is good and by the end of Year 2 their attainment is above average. In 2013 standards were significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in writing, although above average, was not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 2 pupils make faster progress in reading and mathematics than they do in writing. This is because, in some lessons, pupils have insufficient opportunities to learn to write longer sentences and practise through extended pieces of writing. In addition, the checks that staff make on the progress of individual pupils are not always thorough enough and this means that work does not always build carefully enough on their prior learning.
- School data and work in pupils' books show that progress in writing is getting faster in some year groups. In Years 1, 3 and 4, for instance, pupils' rates of progress are improving further due to well planned lessons and sharp marking and feedback. In many cases, girls make faster progress than boys with their written work because boys are not given enough opportunities to research and find out things for themselves.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics. This is because of effective group and individual support, and very good adult support in the classroom. However, as with other pupils, their progress in writing is not as fast as progress in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy reading and they love reading books by their favourite authors. Year 6 pupils read books fluently and make good use of voice and tone. Pupils clearly express their thoughts about the meaning of the books. They are very well supported by up-to-date resources such as books and support from the adults around them.
- There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and pupils who speak English as an additional language. The standards achieved by these pupils are similar to their classmates.
- Only a very small number of pupils are supported by the pupil premium funding but nevertheless the school uses the funding well to support individual pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, with the strongest teaching being seen in reading and mathematics. School records and other inspection evidence confirm that this good teaching is typical.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff help children to do their best and to develop good learning habits and consequently they achieve well.
- The links between letters and the sounds they make (phonics) are taught well from the Early Years Foundation Stage upwards. This is because adults pronounce letter sounds correctly and one-to-one support is very good. This is especially helpful for the less-able pupils. As a result, effective teaching ensures almost all pupils make good progress in reading over time.
- Due to regular checking of lessons, the quality of teaching across the school has improved since

the last inspection. While teaching is effective in meeting the needs of pupils in reading and mathematics through the use of a wide range of learning strategies, this is not always the case in writing. This is because written tasks do not always build carefully enough on pupils' existing skills.

- Teachers mark pupils' class work and regular homework consistently across both key stages. They encourage pupils to check their own work, as seen, for example, in Year 6. However, their marking does not give pupils consistent guidance on how to improve their work. Consequently, pupils do not always know how to achieve their targets.
- Support staff and other staff play a confident and active role in helping pupils to learn, both within lessons and when working with small groups. This helps to create an environment where all feel welcome and included. This contributes to the good progress made by different groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils, parents and staff say that pupils' behaviour has improved over time and that it is good. Pupils are polite, courteous and show good manners to adults and children alike. They love going to 'Forest School', a woodland area dedicated to learning in the outside environment. A Year 6 pupil commented, 'It's good.' Pupils are proud of the area because they helped to clear and build it.
- Pupils are keen to learn in class and they know the importance of playing safely. They show positive attitudes to learning. They welcome visitors and are keen to talk to them about their progress and the school. However, some pupils, especially boys, do not have the skills necessary to take responsibility for their own learning. Currently, some are over-dependent on continuous adult attention.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities such as 'buddies' for the younger pupils. They enjoy these tasks and younger pupils feel safe.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Pupils have a clear understanding of different forms of bullying, such as name-calling or discrimination against pupils from a different background. Recently, the school has put in place more rigorous processes to monitor bullying; as a result, bullying and unacceptable behaviour have reduced.
- Pupils with challenging behaviour are integrated well by the school with the help of external agencies. Pupils are helpful to others who need support, such as disabled pupils. Consequently, these pupils settle well and enjoy school.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of sanctions if rules are not followed. Staff use a range of methods to manage pupils' behaviour and ensure their safety. As a result, the use of first aid and the occurrence of serious behaviour incidents have reduced since the previous inspection, and pupils now concentrate in lessons. In the last 18 years, there have been only two exclusions.
- The school has been very successful in improving pupils' attendance since the previous inspection. There is targeted support for pupils who are persistently absent. As a result, the school's attendance is above that of most other schools.

The leadership and management are good

- The improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement across the school have been brought about as a result of good leadership.
- The headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher, set about tackling weaknesses identified at the previous inspection with purpose. Together, they display an unbending yet sensitive approach, which has resulted in a shared sense of dedication, accountability and much

hard work on the part of other staff.

- Improvements since the last inspection clearly demonstrate the school's capacity to improve further. There are well informed assessment and tracking systems in place and regular pupil progress meetings. Self-evaluation is accurate, with appropriate priorities for further improvement clearly identified.
- The school ensures that progression through the pay scales is linked to teachers' performance and this has helped improve the quality of teaching.
- Subject leaders are now increasingly involved in the process of securing further improvement in achievement such as in reading and mathematics. Nevertheless, some middle leaders do not keep a close enough check on pupils' progress, especially in writing. Consequently, the progress is not as fast as it is in reading and mathematics.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination by working effectively with pupils to reflect on behaviours that might cause offence. All staff are committed to providing equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils so that everyone has every opportunity to take part in, and benefit from, all that the school has to offer.
- The curriculum gives extensive opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge and experience of the wider world such as through science and faith weeks. As a result, pupils learn team-building skills as well as enjoying the events. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a very positive impact on pupils' personal skills, such as improvements in behaviour and safety.
- The school has good links with outside agencies to support individual pupils' needs. However, some parents feel that not enough information is provided about their child's progress.
- The local authority provides regular support such as training for the development of the governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Since the previous inspection, the governing body has become more challenging as well as supportive and has a grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There has been additional training to enhance governors' skills. The governing body is aware of areas for further improvement, such as in writing. It is aware of performance management procedures and links to pay. It ensures that safeguarding procedures are secure. Governors know the impact of how well the pupil premium funding is spent and how extra support staff are deployed to improve achievement. They are well aware of the use of new primary school sports funding and work in partnership with the local high school to provide additional facilities and professional support to improve pupils' physical education and well-being and their knowledge of how to adopt healthy lifestyles.

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	119539
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426153

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	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Gallagher
Headteacher	Jill Milligan
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2011
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