

Bamber Bridge St Aidan's Church of England Primary School

Larch Grove, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancashire, PR5 6GX

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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 rate of pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is below that found nationally.
- Too few of the most able pupils have reached the higher levels in reading and mathematics in 2013.
- Pupils who are eligible for a free school meal make progress more slowly than that of other pupils in reading and mathematics.
- In the past, teaching has not been good enough to enable pupils to achieve well.
- Currently, there are not enough examples of outstanding teaching.
- Senior leaders' analysis of the progress made by pupils eligible for the pupil premium is not precise enough and this prevents governors from being better informed.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the last inspection, leaders and the governing body have steadily improved the quality of teaching. The impact of this can now be seen in the achievement of current learners, which is consistently good across the school and in writing where standards have risen significantly.
- Disabled pupils and those special educational needs make good progress and their attainment is higher than similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils get off to a good start in the Reception class. They settle quickly and make good progress.
- Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils feel very safe. They enjoy their lessons and are proud of their school.
- Senior leaders have implemented a highly rigorous system of checking teachers' performance. This is now beginning to have an impact.
- Governors are also holding senior leaders to account very effectively. Consequently, the school is improving and is demonstrating that it can improve further.
- Attendance is well above the national average and has been for the past three years.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine parts of lessons taught by five teachers. An observation was undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' exercise books.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, representatives of the local authority, senior leaders and middle managers responsible for leading specific subjects and with other staff and pupils.
- The inspector looked at the school's documentation to help gain an accurate view of its performance, safeguarding policies, school development plans, minutes of governing body meetings, local authority reports, records of behaviour and displays around the school.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of information on how the school checks the progress of the different groups of pupils.
- The inspector took account of the 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and questionnaires distributed by the school.
- The inspector analysed 14 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Desmond Stubbs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national 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 who are looked after by the local authority.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in order to accelerate pupils' progress, especially in reading and mathematics, by:
 - continuing to raise the profile of reading in the school and, in particular, reading for pleasure
 - continuing the school's focus on sharpening pupils' use of their mathematical knowledge to solve problems
 - making sure that the most able pupils are challenged to reach the highest levels in all subjects
 - ensuring teachers having opportunities to observe the best practice in this and other schools.
- Improve leadership and management and the progress of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, by sharpening the precision with which the school checks made on the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, so that all leaders, including governors are alert to every small step of progress these pupils make and can target support more accurately.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement of pupils requires improvement because pupils' progress across Key Stage 2 in reading and mathematics is not fast enough. Too few pupils have made adequate or good progress from their different starting points.
- At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, too few of the most able pupils have reached the higher levels of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics, especially in reading. Lesson observations, particularly in mathematics, showed that teachers now have high expectations for the most able pupils, they are given tasks at a much higher level than the other pupils, and they are also well supported by teaching assistants.
- By the end of Year 6, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is almost a year behind other pupils in mathematics and half a year behind in English. This gap is similar to that seen in other schools. The school has identified the problem but, because they are not analysing the progress data that they have about these pupils precisely enough, they are not in a position to target their needs more accurately and so the gap between their achievement and that of others is not narrowing fast enough.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills below those typical for their age. They settle very quickly and make good progress. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is above the national average. The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) for the youngest children is good and this enables them to achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The Early Years Foundation Stage was awarded Lancashire Step into Quality Mark in May 2013.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 declined in 2013 due to a large number of pupils joining mid-year whose attainment was not as high as the rest of the group. This is not typical of the standards normally reached by the end of Year 2 and the current pupils in Year 2 are set to achieve at least average standards by the end of the key stage.
- Standards in writing have improved and are continuing to improve throughout the school. In 2013, all pupils made the progress expected of them. This is due to pupils understanding very clearly what they need to do to improve their writing and the many opportunities the pupils have to write across the curriculum.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils enjoy their reading, and when reading on their own show good strategies for working out difficult words. In Key Stage 2, better teaching is improving pupils' understanding of what they read. However, pupils have not been taught well enough in the past and pupils have not built up over the long term a good knowledge of books, authors and stories.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress from their individual starting points and most are achieving better than similar pupils nationally. These pupils receive particularly good support from teaching assistants and the school has excellent support from outside agencies, which further supports these pupils.
- In lessons, the standards observed by the inspector show a significant improvement on the past three years. Pupils are now making more rapid progress in all subjects and this is consistent across the school. The standard of work in books is good and generally, pupils' presentation is neat.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because pupils' progress in reading and mathematics across Key Stage 2 has not been fast enough in the past three years. Observations during the inspection, however, show that teaching is now much improved and consistently good across the school, although there is not yet enough outstanding teaching. This is also supported by the school's own checks on teaching.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is a strong emphasis on

communication and a room has been set up to specifically to improve children's speaking and listening skills in a range of different situations.

- Since the last inspection, the staff have worked with a local leader in education developing the teaching of reading. This had a significant impact and the teaching of reading is now much improved. Teachers use good questioning to help the pupils understand the text effectively and pupils are also encouraged to read for pleasure in the class reading areas.
- The teaching of writing is good and this is why pupils' progress has been more rapid in writing than the other subjects. Teachers make accurate assessments of writing and use this information to plan effective activities to ensure good progress is made. Written work is well marked, making it clear to pupils where they need to improve, although in a small number of books the comments could be even more precise in helping pupils to know the next step in their learning.
- This term, pupils are making more rapid progress in mathematics. Teachers use the time in lessons well to ensure all groups of pupils have sufficient time to work on challenging tasks. Most-able pupils have many opportunities to work at the higher levels; they are particularly well supported by teaching assistants. There is a strong emphasis on understanding the basic skills, such as multiplication facts and there is wide range of resources to support this and make learning more interesting.
- Teaching assistants are very effective. Many of them work across different classes supporting different groups of pupils and they are generally very well deployed.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- St. Aidan's is a very warm and friendly school. The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons, on the playground and in the dining hall. Pupils are polite. They display good manners and get along well with each other. Where a child does display challenging behaviour they are very sensitively managed by all staff.
- Behaviour records are well maintained and even minor incidents are recorded. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their behaviour by completing a 'Behaviour Think Sheet'. Pupils say that the way behaviour is managed really 'helps them to be good'.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and bullying is not a problem. Pupils understand how to stay safe when using the internet and know exactly what to do if they did feel threatened. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn about road safety and the teaching of cycling skills for older pupils instructs them how to stay safe when cycling.
- Pupils consistently displayed positive attitudes to their learning. In a Year 3 mathematics lesson, when faced with some very challenging problems, the pupils worked together very effectively and with enjoyment. The same positive attitudes were expressed by pupils when talking about reading and lessons generally.
- Attendance is well above the national average and has been for the past three years.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils' progress in reading and mathematics across Key Stage 2 was still not good enough in 2013. The pace of improvement has, however, become more focused since the summer and the achievement of current learners is now much improved.
- Senior leaders now carefully check the progress of pupils and regularly discuss this with teachers. However, the progress of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is not checked with enough precision. As a result, the impact of the extra funding spent cannot be measured accurately at present. This results in the inability to target resources and ensure faster progress.
- Highly rigorous systems for checking the performance of teachers are now in place. Teachers

are frequently observed, their planning is scrutinised each week and exercise books are checked regularly. The impact of this is that teaching is improving and that pupils make more rapid progress in all subjects is now evident.

- Senior leaders have worked with the local authority to improve the appraisal of teachers. Teachers now have very challenging targets, which are linked to pupils' progress. Teachers receive detailed feedback about their performance and how it can improve. This is having a significant impact on teaching. It is much appreciated by teachers and shows that the school has the capacity to improve further. However, teachers have had too few opportunities to observe outstanding teaching in other schools.
- Middle leaders are also having an impact on improvements in both pupils' achievement and teaching in their subjects. They are very involved in checking teachers' performance and have a good understanding of their subjects and where improvements need to be made.
- The curriculum is balanced and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education very well. Christian values permeate all classrooms. Pupils' writing, in particular, is being effectively developed in most subjects. Teachers make every effort to make learning exciting by preparing practical lessons and giving pupils a wide range of learning experiences. One parent commented, 'my child comes home enthused and excited about her learning'. Computers are used effectively across all subjects to enable pupils to either extend their learning or practise their basic skills. Pupils have many opportunities to develop their social skills by working with a partner. For example in a physical education lesson, pupils worked effectively together to develop a gymnastics routine.
- The Primary School Sport funding has been effectively used to improve the skills of all staff thus ensuring sustainability.
- The school works well with parents and was awarded the Leading Parent Partnership Award in 2013. Parents know their voice is important and parents praised the accessibility of staff in the questionnaires sent out by the school. Only a small number responded to Parent View but these responses were generally positive.
- A local leader in education and the local authority have provided training on how to improve the quality of teaching and given support to senior leaders and the governing body to good effect.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has an accurate view of the school's work and where it needs to improve. The governors hold senior leaders to account, in particular at the standards committee meeting, where the headteacher is challenged about the achievement of pupils and what is being done to raise standards. Governors also have a very good understanding of performance management and how it is linked to the career stage of teachers, and that pay progression is not automatic. Governors have rectified the value for money issue raised at the last inspection. They oversee the school's finances effectively, including checking that the Primary School Sport and the pupil premium funding are spent appropriately. However, the school is not analysing data with regard to these pupils with enough precision for governors to judge the effectiveness of planned spending and this hampers the governing body's ability to evaluate actions. The governing body have received up-to-date training from the local authority.

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	119380
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426330

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	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	F Heyworth
Headteacher	Sandra Evans
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2012
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