

Walton-le-Dale Community Primary School

Severn Drive, Walton-le-Dale, Preston, PR5 4TD

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Inspirational leadership by the headteacher is moving the school forward rapidly. Staff morale is high and everyone is focused on raising standards.
- All groups of pupils now make good progress from their starting points. Standards are good in reading and mathematics and rising in writing.
- Teaching is good. Imaginative activities capture pupils' interest and inspire confidence and enjoyment. Pupils benefit from an extensive range of activities beyond standard lessons.
- Excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants makes sure that pupils with disabilities and special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils are proud of their school and value the warm and trusting relationships that underpin their positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils behave well. They are very well cared for and safe at all times.
- Parents are very positive about the school and the direction it is taking. Excellent partnerships between the school and home are promoted through the innovative use of computer technology.
- Leaders manage the performance of staff well. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving securely. The strong teamwork between staff, governors and parents means that the school is well placed to continue to get better in future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding. There are inconsistencies in some aspects which hinder progress.
- Standards in writing are below those in reading and mathematics. Not enough pupils reach above average standards, particularly at Year 2.
- The attainment of pupils is not recorded efficiently enough to clearly identify whether all groups of pupils are reaching sufficiently high standards.
- Pupils do not always have enough time to think about how well they are doing in order to identify where, and how they can improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 20 lessons.
- Meetings were conducted with governors, the staff team and groups of pupils. In addition, a meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Information from the scrutiny of a range of school documentation added to inspection judgements. This included the details relating to safeguarding, the improvement plan, the school's procedures for gaining an accurate view of its performance and records of pupils' standards and progress.
- In order to evaluate the views of parents, 31 responses posted on the online questionnaire (Parent View) were analysed and inspectors held a meeting with 12 parents. In addition, an evaluation was made of the recent questionnaire of parents' views carried out by the school.
- An analysis of 27 staff questionnaires, together with dialogue with teachers and teaching assistants, gave the inspectors an insight into the views of the staff.

Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Maloney

Additional Inspector

Sharon Bruton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement or special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A new head teacher took up post in April 2013.
- There is a before and after school club; it is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing by:
 - securing higher expectations for most able pupils so that more reach above average standards
 - building on the good work already started to provide pupils with more opportunities to write frequently and across a wide range of subjects
 - focusing on improving the style of pupils' writing, particularly in Key Stage 2, as well as their grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - refining the current assessment systems so that the attainment of groups of pupils is more efficiently recorded and tracked, so that any group that could do better is quickly identified and action taken to improve their achievement
 - ensuring that marking is of consistent high quality in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work, enabling pupils to have sufficient time to reflect on how well they are doing and to understand better how they can make faster progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is better than at the previous inspection. Decisive actions taken by the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, have improved teaching, sharpened the accuracy of assessment of pupils' achievement and raised the expectations for pupils. As a result, progress is accelerating rapidly; pupils are learning at a good, and at times a very good, rate.
- Children enter Nursery with a range of skill levels but for many, they are below typical levels for their age, particularly in their communication and language. Good quality care and skilful teaching ensure that they gain confidence and make good progress in developing their early reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average. In Key Stage 2, attainment has been on an upward trend. In 2013, standards were above average in reading and mathematics. The school is taking effective action to improve pupils' attainment in writing. Its reliable assessment information shows that in this subject, most pupils now make good progress.
- The strengths in reading, reported at the previous inspection, remain. Learners get a very good foundation in the sounds that letters make (phonics) which prepares them well to read at a good standard as they move through the school. Results in the Year 1 phonics test are above the national average. Recent investments in new library books and imaginative strategies to encourage reading both in school and at home are raising the already good reading standards further.
- Achievement in mathematics is also a relative strength and progress is accelerating as a result of a sharper focus on promoting higher expectations in Year 2 and lower Key Stage 2 in particular. The strong emphasis placed on mental mathematics and the encouragement for pupils to get involved in competitive homework activities accessed online is bearing fruit. Pupils are acquiring a secure understanding of essential mathematical ideas and increasingly gaining the confidence to apply them to solve mathematical problems.
- In writing, standards are improving across the school as progress accelerates, but are not yet as good as in reading and mathematics. Not enough pupils are attaining standards above average in writing, particularly by the end of Year 2. Effective initiatives are successfully improving the skills of pupils. Pupils are now writing more frequently and in a wider variety of subjects than before. Basic skills of English grammar, punctuation and spelling are improving but are still not as high as they could be in Key Stage 2. By the school's own admission, handwriting and presentation are not yet good enough.
- The school is committed to securing equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs make good progress toward their individual targets. This is because of good quality support programmes and effective teaching in lessons. Teaching assistants are skilled at accelerating pupils' progress through small group work and one-to-one tuition.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the additional pupil premium funding now make good progress alongside their classmates. The starting points of many of these pupils are low. In 2013, wide gaps existed between the attainment of such pupils in Year 6 and others in their class; some pupils were working at levels three terms behind their classmates. Inspection evidence from observing lessons, work in pupils' books and school information on pupils' progress show that the gap has closed very significantly and that these pupils are making much faster progress. Across the school, the needs of such pupils are identified and support is provided which is narrowing the gap in attainment between such pupils and others in the school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching and its impact on learning has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The morale of teachers and teaching assistants is very high because of the inspired

leadership of the headteacher. They thrive on the positive guidance and very clear expectations set for them. A well-informed parent commented that the teaching team 'had been re-invigorated' over the last two terms and that school was now fun for their child and their progress was much better.

- While some teaching is outstanding there are some inconsistencies in expectations in writing and marking which slow the progress of some pupils. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching of literacy and mathematics is good. It has improved because of sharply focused training for staff. Teachers make their explanations of new learning clear and understand their subjects well. Good opportunities enable pupils to practise their reading and mathematical skills in other subjects, supporting pupils' improved progress. The scope for pupils to write more regularly has been increased and is starting to raise standards. However, the full impact of the improving provision has yet to be seen in test results.
- All staff are keen to improve their practice to drive pupils' progress at a faster rate. In the large majority of lessons, children learn at good rate. They enjoy the activities available to them, are developing pride in what they do and, increasingly, showing perseverance to do as well as they can.
- Where pupils make fastest progress, teaching provides them with clear and precise guidance as to the expectations for their work. In such cases, pupils' views are valued and there are opportunities for pupils to debate and work out their ideas together. In an excellent art lesson, for example, some younger Key Stage 2 pupils became engrossed in the work of the sculptor Henry Moore. They proudly explored a range of techniques to create light and shade linked to a body position of their own choosing. In so doing, they deepened their understanding of three-dimensional art and techniques for representing their ideas.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress. Staff ensure that learning is fun and engaging. Across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, the teaching of phonics is very effective. Recent improvements to the way pupils are grouped according to ability have boosted achievement further.
- Improvements to the accuracy of assessment are enabling the teaching team to plan with more accuracy for the needs of all pupils. In their marking, most teachers identify clearly where learning has been successful and where it could be improved, but this is not always the case. Where marking is most helpful, it encourages pupils to think about how well they have done and what they can do to improve. However, pupils are left on some occasions not understanding fully what they need to do improve their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- 'This is like a second home' - a comment uttered by one pupil and typifies the view of every pupil consulted. Both pupils and parents rate the school as a very caring and enjoyable place to be. This is one reason why attendance is above average. A parent reported that their child was very disappointed when she is ill and not allowed to go to school.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and conduct themselves well at all times. Behaviour is often exemplary in lessons but not quite as good outdoors at play where some mildly boisterous behaviour occurs. Pupils welcome visitors and are very proud of their school.
- Parents, staff and pupils all agree that behaviour has improved considerably since the last inspection. There is a consistent approach to managing behaviour across the school. Pupils are very positive indeed about the systems in place, partly because they influenced them by being involved in drawing up the school and class rules. New initiatives, such as the provision of tickets, which lead to a raffle prizes for good behaviour, have boosted the pupils' desire to behave well. Detailed records held by the school show that incidents of unacceptable behaviour have diminished significantly since last September as the new policy has taken effect.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are secure at all times and pupils and parents report no concerns. Imaginative approaches to raise the profile of anti-

bullying work, such as the 'graffiti wall', are popular, positively received by pupils and have boosted their determination to challenge any bullying that occurs. They have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying including the safe use of the Internet and homophobic and racist attitudes.

- Pupils' have good levels of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Their willingness to take on responsibilities within school prepares them well as good citizens of the future. They are keen to be playground leaders, library monitors and to support others during lunchtime. The 'Rota Kids' are proud of their efforts to raise funds for others including overseas.
- The good access for pupils to an increasing range of educational visits including residential stays enhances considerably their social development and enables them to develop good or better skills of working with others.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong, determined leadership. He successfully combines very high expectations with sensitivity and care for staff and pupils. Staff are unanimous in their praise for the changes underway because of the positive impact they are having on the pupils' achievement.
- The individual talents and skills of staff are valued and the senior leaders are working hard to build everyone's expertise and develop their individuality. The effectiveness of the staff's performance is constantly under review and annual appraisals take place with each individual. High expectations for individuals combined with good support and regular opportunities to attend training, are raising the confidence and abilities of staff.
- Staff are encouraged and supported to take on leadership responsibilities and use their professional expertise to lead subjects and drive forward improvement. Crucial areas of the school, such as the Early Years Foundation Stage and the provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, are very well managed. Strengths also exist in the leadership of mathematics, English and computer technology; effective strategies are being successfully managed which are raising achievement.
- Regular meetings to discuss each pupil's progress give staff the required time to understand how well every individual is doing. The system for recording the attainment of different groups of pupils in each class is not developed well enough to assist the quick identification of the attainment of different groups. This means that opportunities to adjust teaching for different groups may be missed.
- Partnerships with other organisations, such as the local children's centre and the health service benefit the academic and personal development of all pupils. The school is increasingly participating in the local community, sharing its choir with elderly people in local homes and singing at the local supermarket. Pupils and parents were extremely proud of how pupils performed their version of Macbeth at a local theatre as part of a Shakespeare festival.
- The school has worked closely with the local authority to raise the achievement of pupils and to improve the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is good. Some excellent initiatives have added interest and enjoyment to learning. All subjects are provided as before but now the options for pupils' learning have been widened significantly. Music is now a key feature for pupils; in Year 4 pupils can learn brass instruments. Spanish and French are on offer and the range of competitive sports is now much wider.
- Partnerships with parents are excellent. Outstanding use of computer technology not only keeps parents informed about school events and their child's progress but also about how to help learning at home. The Walton-le-Dale TV, regular class blogs and the ongoing development of the school's website mean that parents and pupils are very involved in all that goes on.
- The primary school sports funding has enabled far more pupils than before to attend sporting clubs, participate in interschool events and have access to outside sports coaching. An increased proportion of pupils now participate in activities out of school hours and their enthusiasm for the

improved provision is very apparent in discussions with pupils.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The contribution of the governing body to the school’s improvement is very positive and adds to the capacity of the school to continue to improve. The Chair of the Governing Body provides strong leadership for the work of the governing body. Governors take part in regular training that equips them well to understand how well the school is doing and where it could do better.
- Governors are paying more visits to lessons and checking how well different subjects are taught. Consequently, they know about the quality of teaching and where it could improve.
- Governors have a good focus on how effectively the school is spending its money. They establish measureable targets for pupils’ achievement linked to staff pay. The governing body keeps a close eye on the impact of pupil premium funding on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- The governing body ensures that all aspects of safeguarding are secure and meet requirements.

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	119286
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	431653

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	441
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Pierrie
Headteacher	Christopher Shields
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2012
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