

Poulton-le-Sands Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA4 5QA

Inspection dates

9–10 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- By the end of Year 6 pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough and too few pupils make good progress.
- The achievement of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is too far below that of other pupils in the school.
- There is not yet enough good quality teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress over time.
- Work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' needs, and teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- Teachers do not always give pupils enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work, and do not always check that pupils follow this advice when it is given.
- At times, some pupils do not behave as well as they should and get on with their work in lessons, particularly when teaching is not sufficiently challenging or interesting.
- Not all middle leaders are active enough in using assessment data to analyse pupils' progress so that they are clear how well pupils are doing.
- There are not enough opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in other schools.
- Improvements introduced by the headteacher have not yet had sufficient time to make sure that teaching is consistently good. As a result, pupils do not yet achieve as well as they should in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has a clear view of what the school needs to do to improve.
- Leaders monitor pupils' performance carefully and this is helping to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils feel safe in school and well supported.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- Parents are supportive of the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or part lessons, including one observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and with five governors, including the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met a representative from the local authority and spoke to the school's local authority improvement partner.
- Discussions were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils in Year 2 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents. These included data concerning pupils' current achievement, development plans and performance management information. Inspectors also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings and the local authority reports were also considered.
- Inspectors considered 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They also took into account 17 responses to the questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sheila Mawer

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in seven classes from the Reception Year to Year 6.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children from service families) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is around average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing 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 raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2 and for pupils eligible for the pupil premium by:
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high enough
 - making sure that teachers always provide work that meets pupils' needs and is sufficiently challenging
 - making sure that teachers always give pupils very clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work, and check that pupils are following this advice
 - providing teachers with more opportunities to observe outstanding teaching in other schools to enable them to improve their skills.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by ensuring that teaching always engages pupils so that they apply themselves fully to learning in lessons and do not become distracted.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by making sure that middle leaders are more actively involved in using assessment data to analyse pupils' progress, so that they have a better picture of how well pupils are doing in their subject and can, therefore, make a greater contribution to school improvement.

An external review of the use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not high enough by the end of Key Stage 2, and too few pupils achieve well.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been below average for the last three years and pupils have made less than the expected rate of progress for the past two years. In 2013, the proportion of pupils who made the expected progress by the end of Year 6 was below average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing. Few pupils made more than expected progress, especially in writing.
- Pupils are now making better progress because the quality of teaching is improving. The school's systems for checking how well pupils are doing, lesson observations and the work in pupils' books confirm this.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 are now generally making the expected rate of progress, whatever their starting point. Current Year 6 pupils are on course to make better progress and achieve improved standards that are much closer to the national average in 2014.
- In the past, pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium have not achieved as well as other pupils. In the national tests in 2013, the standards reached by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were over one year behind those of other pupils, especially in reading. The school's system to check pupils' progress shows that this is beginning to improve, and the achievement gap is beginning to close. This is because of the improved support these pupils receive.
- Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are generally below those expected for their age. They make good progress in Reception and join Year 1 with standards that are broadly average.
- Pupils make steady progress during Key Stage 1 and achieve broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils make steady progress in reading during Key Stage 1. Pupils read regularly and have a sound knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check was above average in 2012 and 2013.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is similar to that of other pupils. Although they reach higher standards and make progress at a faster rate than other pupils, too few of them make good progress, especially in writing because they are not always challenged enough.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive effective small group and individual support so that they make similar progress to their classmates.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, it still requires improvement because, over time, it does not ensure that pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. This is especially true for Key Stage 2 pupils and those eligible for the pupil premium.
- The majority of the teaching seen during the inspection was good. There was no inadequate teaching but nor was any outstanding teaching observed.
- In lessons where progress is slower, teachers do not have high enough expectations of how much pupils can achieve. Teachers do not always make sure that the work they provide is challenging enough to meet pupils' different needs and abilities. As a result, some pupils' behaviour slips, they lose interest and concentration and they do not learn as much as they could.

- Teachers mark work regularly and use praise well, but do not always give clear enough guidance about what pupils need to do to improve their work. Nor do they always check that any advice they do give is being followed by pupils.
- In lessons where pupils learn well, the work suits pupils' needs and abilities and engages them in their learning. There is a good level of challenge for pupils, with good opportunities provided for them to think things out for themselves.
- An example of this was seen in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, where pupils were investigating the properties of angles in a triangle. The teacher provided the different groups of pupils with different, challenging tasks that required them to use and apply what they had already learnt, and asked probing questions to check pupils' progress and extend their learning. As a result, all pupils concentrated well and made good progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effective. There is a good balance between activities directed by teachers and children making their own choices, and also between indoor and outdoor activities, despite the constraints imposed by the cramped site. Learning is purposeful and well matched to children's levels of development. As a result, they make good progress.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and are usually effective in supporting the learning of pupils who need extra help, such as those with special educational needs or who are supported by the pupil premium. They provide extra help in the classroom or in small group or individual sessions to ensure that pupils understand their work and make progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because pupils' attitudes to learning are not always good when the teaching does not interest them. Pupils say that in some lessons some pupils become distracted and do not pay attention. One pupil said 'they talk in class when they shouldn't and we don't learn enough.' Inspectors saw this happening in some lessons.
- Inspectors observed that behaviour around school is generally good. Pupils wear their uniforms smartly and there is little litter. However, pupils say that there is sometimes some misbehaviour on the playground and that some pupils can sometimes be 'mean' to others.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of the different forms of bullying, including name-calling and cyber-bullying. They say that there is a small amount bullying in the school, but less than there used to be. They have confidence that staff sort it out quickly when it happens.
- A small number of pupils occasionally present challenging behaviour. Staff throughout the school manage this consistently and positively. The newly appointed learning mentor is having a strong impact in this area by dealing with these issues in close partnership with parents.
- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school, feel safe and are well cared for, and their parents agree. Attendance is average.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet and when crossing roads. All parents who responded to the Parent View survey thought that their children were safe in school and inspection evidence confirms that the school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because achievement and the quality of teaching require improvement, and have not been improving strongly enough. Changes introduced by the headteacher and school leaders are leading to improvements in teaching and are beginning to raise achievement. However, these changes are too recent to have led to consistently good teaching and good progress over time.
- The school has an accurate and realistic view of how well it is performing. Senior leaders, including governors, are acutely aware of what the school needs to do to improve. The school

improvement plan is strongly focused on improving teaching and raising achievement, particularly at Key Stage 2 and for pupils eligible for the pupil premium.

- There are good systems to check on pupils' progress and achievement. Senior leaders use the information effectively to identify any underachievement and to provide pupils with extra help when they need it.
- The school has employed a learning mentor since September 2013 to meet the needs of more vulnerable pupils. This is helping to improve the rate of progress of these pupils and the achievement gap between them and other pupils is beginning to close. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- Effective systems to check on the quality of teaching help leaders identify where further action or support is needed. The school can show examples of where extra support, coaching and mentoring have improved the performance of individual teachers, as well as contributing to an improvement in the overall quality of teaching. This is beginning to have an impact on raising pupils' achievement.
- However, although there is some good teaching in the school, it is not consistently good or better. There are not enough opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in other schools in order to influence improvements.
- Middle leaders are accountable for pupils' achievement and progress in their subjects but they do not all use assessment data well enough to analyse pupils' progress. This limits their ability to assess the impact of their actions on raising pupils' achievement.
- The well planned curriculum is enriched by a range of activities, clubs, trips and visits, including sport, drama, and cultural activities. Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibility in areas such as the school council, and there are strong links with the local church. These make a firm contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is using the additional primary school sport funding effectively to improve the quality of physical education. It has joined with the local high school sports cluster and specialist teachers are working with pupils to enhance the range of sporting activities offered, as well as improving the skills and expertise of the school's staff. This is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being and healthy lifestyles.
- At senior leaders' request, the local authority is providing additional assistance to the school. This is at an early stage, but extra training, advice and support is helping to increase the effectiveness of school leaders in improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and learning, pupils' achievement and behaviour and safety. They have undertaken training to improve their knowledge and skills, and are able to analyse and interpret data about the school's performance.
 - As a result, governors know how well the school is doing and where it needs to improve. They were involved in the decision to seek extra support from the local authority. Specifically, they identify achievement at Key Stage 2 and the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium as the key issues facing the school.
 - They are well aware of how pupil premium funding has been spent, but are not satisfied with the impact it has had to date.
 - Governors are very supportive of the school, and are frequent visitors in a variety of capacities. They hold the school to account through an effective sub-committee structure where they ask probing, challenging questions about whether pupils are doing as well as they should be doing. They set challenging targets as part of the headteacher's appraisal.
 - Governors understand the importance of performance management and make sure that pupils' performance is considered when making decisions about the pay of teachers and teaching assistants.
 - Governors are clear that they meet all statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding, and ensure that the school's finances are well managed.

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	119538
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	431794

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Woodhouse
Headteacher	Victoria Bould
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2011
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