

# Banks St Stephen's CofE School

Greaves Hall Avenue, Banks, Southport, Merseyside

**Inspection dates** 12–13 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 Year 1 to Year 6, current pupils achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and this ensures that they make good progress.
- The pupils who join and leave the school at other times than is normal make good progress during their time at the school.
- Good leadership and management have driven forward improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Good teaching promotes good learning because learning is often well planned.
- Attendance is good and has improved significantly this year. The pupils are punctual to school.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are respectful, polite and well mannered. There are clear systems in place to support this.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in class and especially with their homework tasks.
- Pupils' work is well marked by the adults in the school. Everyone understands the target maps and pupils really enjoy and achieve with their learning journey.
- Pupils feel very safe in this friendly school. They learn about and are respectful of different cultures and beliefs. They want to be successful citizens.
- The pupils are proud of their school. Everybody is made to feel very welcome and everyone has equality of opportunity regardless of their background or ability.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Leaders do not always analyse the school information about pupils' progress to plan for further improvement as rigorously as they could, especially for challenging the most able pupils in mathematics.
- Subject leaders do not always make a difference to pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. The inspector also made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6. There were observations of the teaching of letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1, 2 and 3.
- Separate meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector reviewed information from 12 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector took account of the views of staff from 21 questionnaires.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including national assessment data, the school's assessments, the school's view of its own performance, local authority reports, curriculum information, pupils' work and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Banks St Stephen's CofE Primary School is a smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll has reduced since the last inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding is similar to the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided 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 proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average but rising.
- The number of pupils entering or leaving the school at other times than normal is rising.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage, Year 1 and Year 2 are split into two classes with a mixed age range. There are very small numbers in some year groups, such as Years 3 and 4.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards that are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school runs a breakfast club, for a small charge, and an after-school club.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To improve the quality of the leadership and management further by:
  - ensuring that school data and other available information is rigorously analysed and evaluated to make a greater impact on provision and pupils' achievement in mathematics, especially for the most able
  - developing the skills of the subject leaders so that they are able to plan challenging activities to encourage pupils to practise their reading, writing and mathematics in a range of subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good because pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. As a result, standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics are generally in line with the national average. Current data indicate that attainment levels are rising, with many pupils predicted to achieve the higher levels in 2014.
- Most children start school with skills, especially in reading, writing and number that are below those typically expected for their age. After taking some time to settle, they start to make good progress, particularly with reading. This is because teaching is well organised and full account of children's varying abilities is taken when planning group activities, such as when they learn about letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- Between Years 1 and 6, many pupils make sustained, good progress. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 2 is not as high as for pupils nationally. However, they make good progress from their starting points.
- In 2013, in the national check on pupils' skills in phonics at the end of Years 1 and 2, a higher proportion of pupils than do so nationally reached the expected standard. The phonic skills of pupils in the school are developing well. Those pupils who have English as an additional language also make good progress in reading.
- Pupils read widely and often enough to develop their reading skills at the expected rate and beyond. This is particularly strong in Year 6 where provision is good, resulting in good progress. Some pupils this year are predicted to achieve the higher grade of Level 6 in reading.
- In mathematics, while pupils' achievement is good, it is not as strong as in reading and writing especially for the most able pupils. Leaders do not have a tight enough grip on the complexities of the data and all the school information to ensure that provision is the best it can possibly be.
- Those pupils who enter and leave school at times other than is normal, generally make good progress because provision is very well matched to their varying needs.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers due to good internal support and the school's effective partnerships with external agencies.
- The pupil premium funding ensures that the pupils eligible for such funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, are making good progress. In 2013, the attainment of such pupils was approximately two and a half terms behind that of other pupils in the school. However, current school data confirm that gaps in school are closing.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and results in pupils making good progress. This is confirmed by the work in pupils' books that shows good progress. Teachers usually have an accurate understanding of what pupils are able to do and they plan work that enables them to learn well. However they do not always set mathematics work that challenges the most able to think hard.
- Staff training in teaching reading, writing and phonics (letters and the sounds they make) has made a marked difference to pupils' learning. The teaching for pupils with English as an additional language is good and results in pupils' good achievement because pupils have good English speaking role models.
- The quality of marking is effective at improving learning because it is regular, consistent and celebratory. Teachers' comments in pupils' books help pupils to know what they need to do next to improve their work. Time is provided for pupils to respond to comments, making sure that pupils understand and correct their errors.
- Pupils in Year 6 make excellent progress because teaching ensures that there is a fast pace to the development of pupils' reading and writing skills. For example, pupils were totally involved and wanting to learn as much as they possibly could in a writing lesson where they had been

asked to explore different types of narratives. When working with a partner, pupils tackled this difficult task with confidence and skill, producing well-thought-out pieces of writing, with memories in the form of flashbacks.

- Highly trained and well-prepared teaching assistants make a significant impact on pupils' learning because this provision is well tailored to suit pupils' varying needs.
- Parents and pupils say that teaching is good. Pupils enjoy and achieve a great deal through working on a whole variety of relevant homework tasks.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The pupils' attitudes to learning are good and make a positive contribution to their progress. They have a sense of what is good behaviour and pride themselves on knowing what is not acceptable. They have a good sense of caring for their classmates. They are well on the way to becoming valuable citizens and empathetic and caring individuals.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. The older pupils act as good role models and help those in need to find friends or sort out any issues. They are very proud of their smart uniforms and their learning environment.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and considerate. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they often enjoy their learning and try their best to succeed. One pupil said, 'We all like school because the teachers plan exciting lessons for us'. Another said, 'I love the school book club and the reading as the characters draw you in and you want to find out more'.
- Attendance is above the national average. There are effective checking systems in place and links with parents are good. This ensures that learning continues at home for most pupils with research work, projects and the practise of basic skills.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The parents and staff believe that pupils feel safe and are happy in school. Pupils know about name-calling and physical bullying and say that it does happen but it is rare. However, they do know who to talk to if this happens. They know how to keep themselves safe and talk sensibly about the dangers of inappropriate use of the internet.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher has established a plan for raising standards. She drives forward the need to concentrate on the progress that pupils are making from their starting points. Actions aimed at improving the school have been introduced effectively. The letters and sounds scheme, for example, is making a big difference to the development of pupils' early reading skills.
- The headteacher's checks on the quality of teaching are carried out well. This has led to improvement in quality so that it is consistently good throughout the school, with some examples of outstanding practice. However, subject leaders do not yet play a full part in checking the quality of provision and pupils' outcomes in their subjects. This means that, for example, they miss opportunities to ensure that pupils practise their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum. The headteacher holds staff to account for the progress of pupils, including the link between this and teachers' movement up the pay scales.
- Leaders assess pupils' knowledge and skills well. This means that the school's data that track pupils' attainment and progress are reliable. As a result, leaders are able to establish an accurate view of how well the school is performing and ensure that pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching improves where necessary. However, this is not done as effectively in mathematics as in other subjects.
- The headteacher regularly checks how well additional funds are used. For example, the pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide support for small group work, which ensures that eligible pupils make good progress alongside their peers. The primary school sports funding is used effectively to improve pupils' achievement, health and well-being through a wide range of

high quality sporting opportunities.

- The curriculum is good and meets the needs of pupils effectively. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well.
- The local authority has provided effective support. The school's leaders value this as a means of professional development and school improvement. This support and help has resulted in improvement in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have an accurate view of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. They have ensured that leaders have addressed identified weaknesses in teaching and checked that performance management systems are implemented effectively. They understand that there is still more work to be done, especially in mathematics.
  - The governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is allocated to support the learning of those pupils for whom it is intended and have checked closely why this support has been effective in narrowing the gap in the attainment of these pupils compared with similar pupils nationally and within the school. Governors ensure that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are in place and that government requirements are met. The safety and welfare of the pupils are high priorities.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119384
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	440840

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	137
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sylvia Berrill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Kenny
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01704 225332
<b>Fax number</b>	01704 507379
<b>Email address</b>	head@bank-st-stephens.lancs.sch.uk



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