

# Kirkham St Michael's Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Kirkham, Preston, PR4 2SL

**Inspection dates** 12–13 March 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	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.

- The achievement of pupils is good. Standards have risen steadily since the previous inspection and are now above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Some pupils in Year 6 are highly skilled writers and mathematicians.
- Children settle happily in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress.
- Pupils throughout the school enjoy reading.
- Teaching is effective and pupils are eager to learn and value the imaginative activities planned for them.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They could identify little they would improve and said they were happy and felt safe. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong.
- Leadership from the headteacher, staff and governors has stuck doggedly to the task of improving the school. Actions have been followed through with determination and improved both teaching and achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds) is not yet fully effective.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 make repeated errors in their spelling and their handwriting is not always neat.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunity to respond to the comments teachers make when marking their work.
- The plans that middle leaders draw up to lead their subjects forward do not show a close link between actions and their impact on pupils' achievement. As a result, it is not easy to measure success.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 11 lessons and parts of lessons.
- The team looked at samples of pupils' work in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 with a focus on writing and mathematics.
- Pupils read to the inspectors.
- Discussions were held with the staff, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority and Blackburn diocese.
- A range of documents were scrutinised, including the school's improvement plan, the evaluation of performance, data on pupils' progress and information about safeguarding.
- There were insufficient responses to the parents' on-line questionnaire (Parent view). Inspectors gained information from the questionnaire sent out by the school and also talked to parents as they attended the school act of worship.

## Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steven Rigby

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language, although this is rising with more Eastern European families moving into the community.
- An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been staff changes and disturbances to staffing since the previous inspection.

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

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress even further by:
  - making it clear to pupils in Key Stage 1 how to improve their spelling and raising expectations of their handwriting
  - making the teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 more effective
  - checking that pupils have enough opportunity to follow up comments in the marking of their work so that they learn from their mistakes.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - strengthening the role of middle leaders so that their future plans make it clear how actions will improve pupils' progress and show how success will be measured.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Results of national assessments show a fluctuating pattern of attainment. However, it is clear that over the last two years there has been a steady rise in standards as changes in the school have become embedded and the staffing situation has stabilised. A legacy of underachievement has been eradicated and the improved test results reflect good progress from pupils' individual starting points. School data and work in pupils' books show that standards are above average and this rise is set to continue.
- Children start school with skills that are in line with what is expected for their age, although with small groups this varies with some being below this level, especially in their communication skills. Basic literacy and numeracy skills receive good attention through games as well as more formal approaches to teaching sums. Children consolidated their knowledge of numerals, jumping on the correct number after their teacher had thrown a Frisbee with a number on it. They then extended their skills with simple calculations. Data show that attainment on entry to Year 1 has been rising and many reach and exceed the level expected of them.
- The system to teach phonics in Key Stage 1 is not fully effective. The results of the national screening check in phonics in Year 1 were slightly below average.
- Pupils make good progress overall in Key Stage 1 and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. Progress is much improved in Key Stage 2, because pupils benefit from teaching being consistently good so that success is built on year-on-year. Results of national tests in 2013 showed an increase from 2012 rising to slightly above average in reading and mathematics and high in writing. The rate of improvement is accelerating and standards are now above average in Year 6. This is due to a focus on pupils reaching the highest Level 6 and this has increased the number of pupils making more than the expected progress and increasing pupils' overall progress.
- Pupils' reading skills are good. Most improve their phonic skills in Year 2 but a few still lack confidence to apply their phonic skills to tackle new words. Older pupils read fluently gaining great pleasure from books. They have a wide choice of texts, including Shakespeare and non-fiction books.
- Pupils throughout the school quickly gain an understanding of writing in different styles. For example, in Year 2 pupils write a diary excerpt as if they were Florence Nightingale. Older pupils write letters and become experts at taking notes which prepares them well for their secondary education. Presentation in Year 6 is often exemplary and pupils structure work well and use grammar and punctuation accurately. This is not always the case in Year 2 and work in a few books includes incorrect spellings and handwriting that is not easy to read.
- Attainment in mathematics has risen, with teaching giving more focus on the application of skills so that pupils solve problems with increasing confidence. Pupils in Year 4 were skilful when calculating the area and perimeter of tables in the classroom.
- The most able pupils make good progress. Year 6 pupils are very clear about how to reach the next level and the most able pupils appreciate the additional activities that accelerate their learning. There are an increasing number of highly skilled writers and mathematicians.
- The few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress, although this varies depending upon their specific needs. Additional help in class and also when required individually out of class, is successful in enabling these pupils to fill the gaps in their skills. Training leads to effective help for pupils' specific needs, as in providing exercise books with coloured paper for those with difficulties in deciphering letters.
- Newcomers, including those few who are at the early stages of learning to speak English, receive sensitive guidance. They say they enjoy school and this adds to their success in catching up with their peers.
- There is no significant difference in the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, and other pupils. Results of national

tests in 2013 showed these pupils were broadly in line with this group of pupils nationally, but below their peers in the school by approximately one year. Current data reflect a steady improvement made by these pupils and in Year 6 their attainment is in line with the level expected for their age in writing and mathematics and above in reading. This improvement reflects the school's effective promotion of equality of opportunity.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- The steady drive to improve teaching has paid dividends. Prior weaker aspects have been resolved and teaching is now good and leads to pupils making good progress throughout the school.
- Pupils said that lessons are not boring. Their learning is sustained because of the variety of activities offered that capture their enthusiasm. Year 6 pupils moved smoothly from discussion, to role play, to sharing ideas and then working alone.
- No time is wasted. Pupils' books show a wide range of activities covered and ample work completed this year.
- Overall, basic skills get good attention, especially when pupils are told not only the overall objective of their lessons but also the basic skills that they must use. This ensures pupils remember to apply their numeracy and literacy skills. For example, in Year 6 pupils developed their skills in writing a character description as a flashback but were also reminded how to write in the past and present tense.
- Reading is taught well overall. Guided reading sessions include a variety of activities. Some include research, others reading with an adult in a group or just time to read for the pleasure of it. A calm and orderly ethos is developed conducive to quiet reading. Phonics is taught regularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and many pupils acquire the skills they need for reading and spelling. However, this is not the same for all pupils because they are often taught at the same level regardless of their ability.
- Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively to extend learning for the most able pupils. On the other hand, throughout the school teaching assistants work well in class and with small groups ensuring pupils who find their work more difficult than most are able to be fully involved in the same topics as others at a level that matches their ability.
- Questions are often based on secure subject knowledge so that pupils have to think and fully explain their answers. Often a follow up question, such as, 'show me your evidence for that?' keeps pupils on their toes and extends their confidence in providing detailed responses.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are generally high. This is very evident in the work in books in Years 5 and 6 which is beautifully presented. This is not as evident in Key Stage 1 where a few pupils' work is not always tidy and spelling errors persist.
- Most marking tells pupils how to improve. Sometimes, these comments lack precision and pupils recognise their mistakes, such as in spelling, but they do not have enough guidance on how to improve this. The school has adopted the acronym 'COW' (check our work) to encourage pupils to respond to marking. Pupils are now encouraged more frequently to do this, for example, one pupils' response is 'working on zapping this question', but as yet this practice is not fully embedded.

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

- Pupils described wide and varied favourite features of their school. They enjoy football at play, the fun they have and also lessons including the mental starters in mathematics! The only dislikes are similar to all of us, 'getting up early!'
- The behaviour of pupils is good. They clearly enjoy school and it is not surprising that attendance is above average. On the odd occasion, younger pupils do not always behave sensibly when unsupervised. The playground is organised into areas for games and also a space

for quiet chatting with friends. Pupils follow this system very well and enjoy a range of activities in an orderly and friendly atmosphere.

- Pupils are smart in their school uniforms and are confident when talking to visitors. They are polite and courteous and a pleasure to be with. Behaviour and attention to the vicar in the collective act of worship were exemplary. Pupils' singing was a delight and parents said these occasions are always a pleasure to attend.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. They have an informed understanding of different types of bullying. Name-calling does happen but pupils say this is resolved most successfully by staff with pupils being brought together to discuss what is happening and to find common ground to renew friendships.
- Pupils know that if they have any worries when using the computer help is at hand by clicking on the dolphin icon. The dangers of cyber-bullying are fully understood and pupils feel well informed to deal with this if it occurs. In discussion with an inspector the older pupils made it very clear to the younger ones what to do if approached by a stranger.
- When asked for a quotation about their school the pupils came up with the following: 'Our school is perfect because it is nice to be part of and to feel safe because nobody can enter school. We enjoy learning.'

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

- The actions of leaders, staff and governors have steadily secured good teaching and accelerated progress throughout the school. The journey has not been without drawbacks as not all staff found the need to change easy and some moved on. Staffing disturbances made it difficult to sustain an even level of progress as new methods were put in place. Now staffing is more secure and an ethos of purposeful learning is established, pupils make good progress. Increased delegation of roles and closer collaboration over priorities mean that staff are in a good position to further increase the momentum for improvement.
- Leaders and staff have an accurate picture of what is working well and what can be improved. This information is used well to plan future developments. Middle leaders draw up termly plans for the subjects they lead. These documents provide good detail on how to tackle identified concerns but do not link actions to the expected impact on pupils' progress and attainment. It is not clear how success is to be measured.
- Pupils' progress is checked robustly and information used to provide help when pupils are not making the expected progress. This has been most successful in raising the attainment of the most able pupils.
- The checks made on teaching are effective and the role is now being delegated by the headteacher to include other leaders. Training is planned to match the school's priorities, but staff changes between training events mean some staff would appreciate more training.
- Meetings between leaders and teachers check on any underachievement and staff are expected to account for any lack of progress. Staff are set targets based on their performance and salary rewards are linked to the achievement of these targets.
- The curriculum has a good balance of academic, social, creative and physical activities. Since the previous inspection more attention is given to applying numeracy and literacy skills across the curriculum. Well-organised visits and visitors enhance considerably pupils' pleasure in learning. During the inspection, Year 6 visited a Hindu Temple and displays shows ample celebration of other faiths alongside many opportunities to learn about Christianity. The promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very successful.
- The new primary school sport funding is being spent efficiently. Detailed plans ensure the money is allocated specifically to the interests of the pupils. For example, a bike shelter is planned to promote cycling to and from school. Staff attend extra coaching sessions to extend their own skills.
- The local authority provides good support for the school especially during difficulties with staffing. Evaluations are pertinent to the school and offer training and extra help when needed.

■ Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- In response to the previous inspection, the governing body has restructured its committees and work is carried out more effectively. This has greatly enhanced the governors' ability to ask challenging questions of leaders. The Vision Achievement and Consolidation (VAC) committee reviews data alongside the local authority adviser. Governors ask for further information, for example, on the resource implications for underachieving pupils and review additional summaries on the progress of different groups of pupils. As a result, they have a good understanding about the spending of pupil premium funding and the effect on the progress of eligible pupils. Governors have links with classes and this provides them with an informed picture of teaching in the school. They understand the link between performance and salary awards. Governors ensure the school's Christian ethos is evident in daily practice and parents value the ethos in which their children learn.

## 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>	119550
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	430970

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	159
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Bunday
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margaret Long
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 683624
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