

Skerton St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Slyne Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 2JH

Inspection dates 7–8 May 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.

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school from their different starting points.
- Teaching is good across the school. Teachers know pupils well and usually have high expectations of what they can do.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve well because work is carefully planned to meet their needs and they are well supported.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved since the previous inspection, and is now good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They say they are well looked after and feel safe in school.
- School leaders, including governors, have a very clear understanding of how well the school is performing and where it can improve further. They have worked well to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Parents are very supportive of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement in writing and mathematics is not as strong as in reading.
- In some lessons, especially at Key Stage 2, teachers' expectations are not high enough and they do not make sure that pupils are challenged to make the best possible progress.
- Teachers do not always check that pupils respond to the advice and guidance given in their marking.
- There are too few opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in other schools.
- The area for outdoor play in the Early Years Foundation Stage is small and restricts opportunities for children's creative and physical development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons, taught by seven teachers. There was one joint observation with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and with five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met two groups of pupils, and also spoke informally with other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. They listened to pupils in Year 2 and Year 5 read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents concerning pupils' current achievement and progress, development plans and performance management information. They 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 took account of 20 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and 26 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gordon Alston

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.
- A large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2013.
- The school has received support from a National Leader of Education at Scotforth St. Paul's Church of England Primary School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to further raise pupils' achievement, especially in writing and mathematics and at Key Stage 2, by making sure that:
 - teachers always set work that is hard enough so that pupils are consistently challenged to make the best possible progress
 - teachers always check that pupils follow and respond to advice about what they need to do to improve their work
 - there are more opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching in other schools to help them improve their skills further.
- Improve the facilities for outdoor play in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are generally below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class because they are well taught and have good opportunities to develop their skills. They are well prepared to enter Year 1.
- Since the previous inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics have improved. In 2013, they were well above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils in Year 1 and 2 are currently making good progress.
- There was a dip in the national test results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 when the standards reached by Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics were below average. The proportion of pupils who made the expected progress was average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, although the proportion who made more than expected progress was average in reading, it was below average in writing and mathematics.
- The school's most recent data and inspection findings about the achievement of current Key Stage 2 pupils provides a more positive picture showing all groups of pupils are making good progress overall. Year 6 pupils are on track to reach improved results in the national tests this year, with a higher proportion making more than expected progress, especially in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' achieve well in reading. This is because there is a strong focus in all year groups on developing pupils' skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they make). As a result, pupils read well and accurately. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2013 was above average.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. There is a clear focus on pupils' using grammar and spelling correctly, and pupils write well in a range of styles across different subjects.
- Pupils have well-developed numeracy skills. They apply and use these skills to solve mathematical problems in real-life situations.
- Overall, achievement in reading is stronger than in writing and mathematics. Fewer pupils make better than expected progress in writing and mathematics than in reading. This is because they are not always given challenging enough work.
- The most able pupils make good progress overall, but like their classmates, they have not always been given work that is hard enough.
- The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Year 6, in 2013, was around half a term above their classmates in reading and writing, and about a term behind in mathematics. The gap in pupils' mathematics attainment is currently closing. Extra assistance, where needed, helps those pupils supported by pupil premium funding, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, to progress as rapidly as other pupils and more quickly in some cases.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well and make similar progress to their classmates because their needs are well identified and they receive good support. This reflects the school's good commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good across the school. This was confirmed by teaching observed during the inspection, the work in pupils' books and school's records of the quality of teaching. This enables pupils in all year groups to learn well.
- Teachers know pupils well and there are very good relationships between pupils and their teachers. Teachers typically have high expectations of pupils and plan work that interests and motivates them in their learning. Pupils say teachers try to make lessons 'fun and interesting'

and they 'learn a lot'. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to learn and do well.

- In mathematics in Year 6, pupils were revising and improving their understanding of algebraic equations. The teacher used questioning skilfully to recap on prior learning and made sure that all pupils, including the most and least able, had different and challenging work, and prompted them to try and reach the higher levels. Pupils enjoyed the lesson, had to think hard about what they were doing and made good progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teachers ensure that children are interested and involved and that learning is purposeful. There is a good balance between activities and between the indoor and outdoor classrooms. However, the outside play area is quite small and restricts opportunities for children's creative and physical development.
- While teachers usually have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, they do not always make sure that the work they set is challenging enough to enable all pupils to learn as much as they could. Sometimes, pupils are not given work that is hard enough to enable them to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and well. They use praise effectively and give useful and detailed suggestions for the next steps in pupils' learning. Pupils greatly appreciate these 'ticked pink' and 'green for growth' comments. As a result, pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. However, teachers do not always check that pupils follow and respond to their advice.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to help disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. As a result, these pupils make the same good progress as their peers. Pupils supported by the pupil premium also receive focused support, and they, too, progress as well as their classmates.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils get on well with their teachers and with each other. They take pride in their work and behave well in lessons so that learning typically proceeds smoothly and without interruption.
- The school's behaviour records and talking with pupils indicate that poor behaviour is rare. Pupils say that behaviour has improved as a result of the new behaviour system and welcome the balance between rewards and punishments. As a result, pupils enjoy coming to school.
- A small number of pupils sometimes display challenging behaviour, but the school manages this consistently and effectively. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are supported in a caring and nurturing way, often involving the learning mentor, and there is evidence of improved behaviour of these pupils.
- Inspectors observed good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils play sensibly and act responsibly at break and lunchtime. Pupils are proud of their school and wear their uniforms smartly. Attendance has risen and is now above average
- The school's work to keep pupil safe and secure is good. Pupils have a good knowledge of the different forms of bullying, and understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying is very rare in school and are confident that the school deals with it effectively if it occurs.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including when using the internet, when cycling and when walking on the roads.
- Almost all parents who responded to the Parent View survey believe that their children are happy, safe and well looked after in school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides very clear ambition and direction for the school, and is strongly supported by senior and middle leaders and governors. Since the previous inspection, their

actions have improved pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching, and this has led to an increase in pupils' achievement.

- There is a calm, orderly and committed atmosphere throughout the school. The parent and staff questionnaires demonstrated very strong support for the school.
- School leaders at all levels, including governors, make good use of data about pupils' achievement and progress. As a result, they have a very clear view of how well the school is performing and where it needs to do better.
- The school improvement plan has a strong focus on further improving teaching and raising achievement. Leaders are aware that progress in writing and mathematics at Key Stage 2 has not been as strong as in reading, and there are well-founded plans in place to address this.
- Senior and middle leaders check on the quality of teaching and learning closely, and evaluate pupils' achievement and progress. Any underachievement is addressed by providing pupils with extra support when they need it. Consequently, all groups of pupils in the school are making good progress.
- Information about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is used to check how well teachers are performing, and to identify where further training or support is needed. It is also used when making decisions about teachers' pay. As a consequence, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils' achievement is rising.
- While teaching is good, it is not yet outstanding overall. Staff work well to share best practice, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to observe outstanding teaching in other schools, in order to improve further their own practice.
- The curriculum is well planned. It interests and involves pupils well in their learning and is enriched by a range of activities, clubs, trips and visits. These include sport, drama, music and cultural activities. Year 6 pupils are greatly looking forward to a forthcoming residential outdoor activities visit.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on responsibility in areas such as the school council, or as house or sports captains, and older pupils act as 'buddies' for younger pupils. These all contribute to pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is using the additional primary school sports funding successfully to improve the quality of provision in physical education. Specialist, external coaches run activities, take lessons and train staff. This has broadened the range of sporting activities and is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being and their lifestyles.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school in improving behaviour, the quality of teaching and learning, and developing the skills of middle leaders. It has also fostered an effective link with a National Leader of Education at Scotforth St. Paul's Church of England Primary School.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are well informed and know the school well. They routinely undertake training to improve their own skills and effectiveness. They understand the 'big picture' and use data well to ask probing questions about how well the school is doing and where it could do better. They also hold the school to account by setting challenging targets as part of the headteacher's appraisal.
- Many visit the school regularly and have first-hand experience of its performance on a day-to-day basis. They have been involved in joint sessions with the staff evaluating the school's performance and constructing the school improvement plan. Governors oversee the school's finances effectively and understand how extra funding, such as the pupil premium and the primary school sport funding, is spent and the impact it is having on eligible pupils. They ensure that the school meets statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding.

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	119534
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426333

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	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kath Foster
Headteacher	C Armistead
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2012
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