

# Darwen St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Turncroft Road, Darwen, Lancashire, BB3 2BW

## Inspection dates

25–26 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Decisive and strong-minded leadership by the headteacher, supported by resolute governors and staff, has resulted in good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Teaching has improved and is now good. As a result, all pupils achieve well and progress is increasing rapidly.
- Excellent use of information about pupils' progress ensures that support for any falling behind is given quickly. As a result, the most able pupils are beginning to reach their potential and pupils who could do better quickly catch up.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs benefit from outstandingly well managed provision. This ensures their total inclusion in school life.
- Pupils feel safe, behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development contributes to strong relationships and a positive atmosphere in which everyone gets along well.
- The very large majority of parents would recommend the school to others and applaud the improvements under way.
- A wide range of visits and visitors enhances pupils' learning. A good variety of clubs after school widens the pupils' experiences.
- Staff morale is high and they benefit from good opportunities for training. The role of teaching assistants has been overhauled and they now play a crucial part in teaching pupils.
- The school is well-placed to move from strength to strength.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not enabled to develop their creative and physical development fully when learning indoors and outside.
- Achievement is not outstanding because of some inconsistencies in teaching. Pupils do not always apply their knowledge to solve practical problems and in particular, in mathematics. This hampers their overall attainment. Also in mathematics, pupils do not fully develop their skills of solving mathematical investigations.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 16 lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Many aspects of the school's work were evaluated, including the support for pupils who need extra help. Inspectors listened to pupils read and conducted discussions with pupils to establish their views of the school. Inspectors examined pupils' work in their exercise books and that displayed in classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents. These included: records of notable incidents including bullying, the tracking of individual pupils' progress, the school's plan for improvement, the use of additional funding for supporting pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, the impact of the primary school sport fund, safeguarding and child protection arrangements and pupils' attendance records.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher to evaluate their impact on the pupils' achievement.
- Meetings were held with the school leaders' team, the teaching assistant team, the manager of provision for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and also with staff of the Early Years Foundation Stage. A discussion was held with six governors and a conversation conducted with a local authority representative.
- Inspectors evaluated the overall views of parents. A meeting was conducted with five parents on the second morning of the inspection. An evaluation was also made of the 33 responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View).
- The views of staff were gathered by analysing the 22 questionnaires returned by staff and discussions with them during the inspection.

## Inspection team

David Byrne, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Janet Keefe	Additional Inspector
Elaine Maloney	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- An above average proportion of pupils is supported by the pupil premium. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been some significant staff changes. The current headteacher took up post in February 2014, after leading the school since June 2013 in her role as deputy headteacher. During the inspection, there was an acting deputy headteacher in post and a supply teacher in one class.
- The school offers a breakfast club at the beginning of the day and an after-school club each Thursday.

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

- Sustain the current rapid improvement in the school so that the quality of teaching and achievement rises from good to outstanding by:
  - enabling children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to develop fully their creative abilities and all aspects of their physical development when learning indoors and outside
  - building the skills of children and pupils across the school to have the confidence to apply their knowledge to solve practical problems, so that they reach even higher standards
  - giving pupils more opportunities to use their basic skills in mathematics to solve mathematical investigations.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement has risen since the previous inspection. From the pupils' individual starting points, their achievement is now good and they make good and accelerating progress. This improvement is the result of decisive leadership by the headteacher, supported by other senior leaders and a strong governing body.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress. They develop skills in reading, writing and mathematics better than in other areas of their development. By Year 1, children read and write at, or in some cases, above the levels that are typical for their age in these areas. While children's social and emotional development is good, aspects of their physical and creative development are held back, because the range of activities both indoors and outside, does not meet the children's needs well enough in these areas.
- In Key Stage 1, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen steadily in recent years and in 2013 were average overall. Robust data held by the school indicate that since then, progress has accelerated further and an above average proportion of pupils is currently working at levels that exceed expectations for their age.
- This includes the pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters make (phonics) at Year 1. In 2013, standards in the national screening test were below average. Adjustments to the way phonics is taught have boosted progress and standards are currently rising. At Year 2, pupils who had missed the expected levels when they were in Year 1 demonstrated great improvement by reaching the standards expected.
- In Key Stage 2, progress is accelerating quickly and standards are rising in all classes. This is partly because of the higher standards leaving Key Stage 1 that are feeding through into Key Stage 2, but more significantly it is due to the efforts of staff to raise expectations and improve learning.
- Robust data held by the school, supported by analyses of the pupils' work, show that standards in Year 6 are currently at or above expectations in reading and writing. Increased time given to grammar, punctuation and spelling is enabling pupils at Key Stage 2 to reach the standards expected for their age at Year 6, after being below in 2013. In mathematics, standards are average at Year 6, while in Years 3 to 5 standards are rising and are above the expectations for their age.
- The school is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all pupils. Precise assessments of the progress of each pupil ensure that anyone who could do better for their ability is identified early. This leads to interventions by skilled teaching assistants to help them catch up.
- The progress of the most able pupils is accelerating quickly, in line with that of other pupils. An increased proportion of pupils now make more than the expected rate of progress. The proportion reaching standards that exceed the expectations for their age is rising in all classes. This improvement is a direct result of the raised expectations set by the headteacher for pupils' performance, which is permeating all that the staff do.
- Across the school, the progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, has improved in line with that of other pupils. This is another benefit of much better systems introduced for supporting any pupil at risk of falling behind. The standards they reach are not yet equal to those of their classmates, but the gap is narrowing quickly.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs receive outstanding support. This facilitates their full inclusion in school life and enables them to make good, and at times, outstanding progress towards their individual targets. In 2013, they reached standards that were below average compared to those of similar pupils nationally, but excellent management of their needs means that these pupils now make rapid progress towards their individual targets.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Learning has improved rapidly in Key Stages 1 and 2 since the previous inspection. Very effective leadership by the headteacher has built up the morale of all staff and sharpened their confidence and abilities. The role of teaching support staff now has a high profile; they willingly take on more responsibility, for example in helping pupils to catch up in reading and mathematics, which is an important factor in the rising standards.
- Pupils benefit from excellent role models by adults in terms of handwriting, speech and behaviour. This contributes to pupils' strong sense of pride in what they do and how they work. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and work hard in lessons and the quality of presentation is much better than often seen.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the focus is on developing children's reading, writing and mathematics. This is, however, at the expense of providing activities to enable children to become confident when learning inside and out and to be creative and develop their physical development.
- Big improvements to assessment over the last year are making a significant impact on the quality of learning across the school. In Key Stages 1 and 2, assessment is now so rigorous and routine, that it is easy for staff to identify any pupil who is not learning as well as he or she could. Skilled and dedicated teaching assistants act swiftly to work with pupils to get them back on track.
- The accuracy of the information about each pupil means that pupils' work is usually set at the right level for them. Consequently, they learn quickly and only occasionally does learning slow down because they are left waiting for activities to get on with.
- Most of the time, pupils are very clear about the purpose of their activities. When this is the case, pupils understand exactly what they are aiming for and whether they reach their targets or not. This involvement of pupils more and more in their learning is paying dividends because pupils gain a sense of achievement from their own success which drives them on to do even better.
- Pupils reported that they love practical work but said that this was not often enough. Inspectors found this to be the case and it limits how much pupils can achieve. For example in mathematics, pupils do not carry out investigations regularly and do not gain enough confidence to find their own solutions to problems.
- Teachers place considerable focus on ensuring that the basic skills of mathematics are understood. As a result, good progress is secured as pupils gain a thorough knowledge of key vocabulary and gaps in the learning of some pupils are being removed.
- Pupils enjoy reading, regularly doing so in lessons and at home. Efforts to grasp the attention of boys are successful and any gap between their performance and that of girls has been narrowed significantly. Standards in writing have been given a massive boost since the previous inspection and pupils now write often and with good quality. An increased emphasis in Key Stage 2 on grammar, punctuation and spelling is raising standards in writing. There are many more pupils working at levels that exceed the expectations for their age in all classes, including Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs benefit from skilled and very intuitive staff who are very aware of each pupil's needs. They are fully included in school life, even where a disability makes this difficult. The most able pupils are identified and their progress tracked so that they are given work that challenges them and extends their knowledge.
- Work in books is regularly marked. This gives pupils a sense of being valued and encourages them to work harder. Usually marking gives pupils clear pointers about how to improve.
- Homework is provided for all pupils, but its quantity and breadth varies. Some parents express the view that they would like more and of different types. Leaders are very aware of these views and intend to review the policy for this.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This good picture is a result of the actions of the school to promote good levels of spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness. Pupils value and respect each other, and generally get along very well together. Most of the time, pupils are attentive and polite to their peers and adults in lessons.
- The school is effective in encouraging pupils to get on well with each other. Outside of lessons, most pupils are very kind and caring towards their school mates and interact well with each other. They like the rewards they get for good behaviour and understand the sanctions if they misbehave. Pupils are adamant that behaviour has got better and better over the last year or so.
- Incidences of bullying are rare. A few pupils report being called negative names, but this is not persistent. They discuss bullying as part of their work in school and are very aware of the forms this can take such as racism, making fun of looks, ostracising people for their life choices and lifestyles.
- A trained member of the staff team is on hand to listen to pupils who need to talk things through, for whatever reason, and this enables them to feel safe and to continue with their learning.
- Pupils have various responsibilities around the school. For example, some Year 6 pupils are librarians and others represent their classes at school council meetings or raise awareness throughout the school of how to help the environment as eco-councillors.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents are unanimous that their child is safe and well cared for. Pupils are given guidance about how they can stay safe themselves, for example learning how to use their bikes safely and how to keep safe in water. They have a good awareness of the dangers of using the Internet and the risk of joining social network sites.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The headteacher took up her post with a clear plan for improving the school and has swiftly implemented it. Her decisiveness, coupled with care for staff and pupils has turned the school round and progress is increasing rapidly. The acting deputy headteacher shares the head's same ambition to raise achievement further.
- Staff morale is high. The headteacher and senior team have created a culture of reflection and support in the school. Senior and middle leaders carry out their roles effectively. They check thoroughly on the quality of learning in classrooms. This very accurately highlights any inconsistencies in learning. Teachers willingly evaluate how to improve their teaching strategies to meet the needs of their learners. They also support each other to improve.
- Staff, pupils and parents are fully behind the changes under way. A rigorous focus on improving the quality of teaching is raising standards in English and mathematics. Strengthened roles for teaching assistants facilitate better provision for pupils needing extra support to catch up. Underpinning the school's improvement are very effective, systematic assessments of pupils. Discussions occur about each pupil's progress each half term and action taken when a pupil is not making the expected progress.
- The management of the performance of teaching and support staff by regular appraisals raise standards effectively. Staff targets are linked to securing accelerated progress for all pupils. Links between pay and performance are also robust. There are many training opportunities for teachers and staff meetings focus well on improving the quality of teaching.
- Pupils study a range of increasingly interesting topics designed to capture their interest. Good attention is given to meeting the needs of both boys and girls. Across the school, pupils are able to go on educational and residential visits to support their learning. For example, some pupils have visited the Manchester Science and Technology Museum and others participated in outdoor activities at John Moores University, Liverpool. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children's physical and creative development is hindered, because activities lack the required quality to achieve good standards.
- Good relationships between the school and church enhance the pupils' understanding of faith

and its importance to them. Links with other schools enhance learning and achievement of pupils, for example enabling pupils with a talent in mathematics to participate in activities that stretch them further.

- Parental support for the school is high. A small minority feel they are not well enough informed about their child's progress. The school is aware of this and has adjusted the way it informs parents through annual reports, parents' meetings and increasing opportunities for parents to join in with school life. The school website is also informative.
- Leaders ensure that the primary school sport funding is used effectively to focus on developing skills which promote healthy lifestyles. The funding is used to employ a specialist coach who provides training for staff and leads an after-school club. As a result, pupils enjoy a wider range of activities and know the benefits of physical exercise.
- The local authority gives effective support to the school, its headteacher, staff and governors. It works with senior leaders to confirm the accuracy of the school's judgements about the quality of teaching and the accuracy of assessment.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have taken the judgement in the previous inspection very seriously. They have worked hard to improve their own performance successfully and consequently contributed significantly to the school's success. Training has been attended and some new governors appointed who bring specific skills to strengthen that already on board.
  - The governing body now has a good understanding of the performance of pupils and staff because it understands the assessment data and their meaning. Governors set targets for the headteacher and have a policy that ensures that the progression of staff wishing to move along the pay scale do so only when they give added value to the school.
  - Nothing is taken for granted and governors work hard to ensure that what they are told is accurate. More visits to school, closer contact with school staff, pupils and parents have all improved the information gathered by governors.
  - School finances are managed carefully to make sure that they give value for money and provide pupils with a safe and stimulating school environment. The pupil premium funding is used well. Its allocation includes increasing the skills of teaching assistants to give tailored support to pupils, deploying a member of staff to support pupils with emotional needs and employing a skilled person to work with families.
  - The governing body makes sure that the school meets all requirements regarding 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119458
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	432107

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	275
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Jackson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Victoria Weddle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 October 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 701299
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