

Freehold Community School

Sidmouth Street, Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 7RG

Inspection dates 2–3 July 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.

- The headteacher, senior leaders, all staff and governors have worked tirelessly to make their school good for the benefit of the pupils.
- Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils continue to do so in Key Stage 1. In 2013, standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were well-above average overall, and especially good in writing.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 is good. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2013 national tests was above average in reading and writing and the current Year 6 pupils are set to attain above average in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those entitled to additional support through the pupil premium make the same good and outstanding progress as others.
- All teaching, including in the early Years Foundation Stage, is at least good, and is much improved since the previous inspection.
- Teachers know pupils exceptionally well. They ensure that learning is interesting and that pupils' school experience is exciting and memorable.
- Pupils' attitude to learning is exemplary. They enjoy finding out new things and are very eager to talk about and share what they are learning with others.
- Governors have taken on-board recommendations from the previous inspection in earnest. They come into school regularly to talk to teachers and pupils and hold all staff to account through their standards committee.
- The school's work with parents is good. The overwhelming majority say that their children are happy and safe at school and are progressing well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The best practice in marking is yet to be fully shared across the school, and teachers do not always indicate to pupils how they can improve their learning.
- Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to practise and refine their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
- Pupils are not consistently stretched to achieve to the very best of their ability, and tasks and activities do not always match their different skills and abilities.
- Systems used to record and monitor pupils' behaviour are not as precise as they should be.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Five observations were carried out with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 2, 3, 4 and 5, and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors took into account 16 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 46 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Meetings were held with six governors, including the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, eight parents, and a representative from the local authority School Improvement Service.
- Various school documents were examined. These included: external evaluations of the school's work; the school's review of its own performance; records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching; development plans; reports to the governing body; data on pupils' progress; records of pupils' attendance behaviour records; and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carol Machell	Additional Inspector
Sharona Semlali	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the vast majority are of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language and most start school at an early stage of learning English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection two new governors have been appointed and the governing body has been reorganised. Three teachers, including a newly qualified teacher, have joined the staff.
- The school offers a breakfast club. This was observed as part of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further and in so doing raise levels of attainment by:
 - ensuring that the best practice in marking is shared across the school, and that when marking pupils' work teachers always indicate to them how they can take the next steps in their learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their mathematical skills across the curriculum
 - making sure that all pupils are consistently stretched to achieve their very best and that tasks and activities always match their different skills and abilities.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by reviewing and improving systems used to record pupils' behaviour.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Almost all children enter Nursery still in the process of acquiring English as an additional language. Their skills in all areas of learning, especially literacy and numeracy, are well below those expected for their age. Children learn in exciting and stimulating classrooms and outdoor learning areas and benefit from highly skilled and caring teachers and teaching assistants. As a result of this they make exceptionally good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and most enter Year 1 with the skills and abilities expected for their age.
- Pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics through Key Stage 1, and good progress through Key Stage 2. By the time they left school at the end of Year 6 in 2013 they had attained above average standards in English, though mathematics was below average. Inspection evidence and the school's data indicate that Year 6 pupils are now on track to attain above-average standards in all subjects by the time they leave school.
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard at the national screening check in 2013 for phonics (letters and the sounds they make) was above average. School data indicate that this proportion has increased in 2014.
- Pupils are especially fond of fiction books and are increasingly being exposed to a wide range of authors and writing styles. Pupils who read for inspectors used their phonic skills well and used a wide range of strategies to help them to read unfamiliar words.
- The school's work to broaden pupils' experiences, through trips to the theatre, museums and local places of interest helps to ensure that pupils make at least good progress in writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. However, although pupils' attainment in this subject has improved this year, more could be done to ensure that pupils are able to practise and refine their mathematical skills in other subjects across the curriculum.
- Teachers regularly assess and identify how well all pupils are performing in reading, writing and mathematics. This has helped to ensure that pupils from minority ethnic groups, and those who speak English as an additional language, practically all pupils, make good and outstanding progress across the school.
- The attainment of pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals, in all subjects at Key Stage 1 is almost as good as their classmates and much better than similar groups of pupils nationally. However, it is not quite as good at the end of Year 6 this year as it was in 2013. The current gap between eligible pupils and others in the school is two terms.
- The school's work to promote equality between boys and girls is good. The previous gap between the attainment of boys and girls in mathematics at the end of Year 6, for example, has now been closed. Girls are now on track to attain above-average standards at the end of Year 6 in all subjects.
- Teachers meet every half term to assess pupils' progress. This has helped to ensure that all pupils, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs make at least good progress in all subjects.
- Teachers are increasingly challenging the most able pupils, most of whom are given additional 'extension activities' in class, and harder work.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and motivate pupils exceptionally well, providing them with interesting activities in class. They ensure that their classrooms are lively, and that pupils are presented with a range of resources wall charts, tables, activity groups and information about mathematics and English, which helps their learning and leaves them in no doubt about what they can do to find things out for themselves.

- Teaching assistants are very well deployed, and well trained. The small group teaching activities that they deliver in reading and writing, for example, are very effective in helping pupils with special educational needs to make good progress.
- Whenever possible teachers link classroom activities to recent visits. This was exemplified in a Year 5 English class where pupils were writing about a recent visit to a sculpture garden in Yorkshire. Having created their own sculpture garden, pupils were fired up and ready to find out about the artist. All made good progress and wrote well-informed accounts of the artist's life and work.
- Mathematics is taught well and is much improved this year. Pupils enjoy applying their skills to practical activities. This was exemplified in a Year 1 class where pupils made rapid progress in learning about symmetry. After a clear summary of what pupils had learned previously, they were grouped and set different tasks. Pupils were particularly proud to share their 'mirror-image' butterfly drawings; others confidently searched the internet for symmetrical patterns. Lower-ability pupils enjoyed the 'hands-on' experience of positioning feathers, stones and tree-bark onto a grid system to create their patterns.
- However, progress is not always this good, especially where teachers do not plan tasks and activities sufficiently well to ensure that pupils of all ability levels are fully engaged.
- From the Early Years Foundation Stage upwards, teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' reading skills. Their success is demonstrated in the outstanding skills displayed by many Reception children as they regularly read facts that they have written about themselves and skilfully use computers and tablets to help them with their reading.
- Work is marked regularly but in some cases teachers' comments are much more helpful than in others, when explanations about how to improve are not made clearly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are highly motivated, exceptionally confident and enjoy talking about their work with their classmates and teachers. Pupils' attendance is above average. They like coming to school because of their friends, teachers, visits and, 'the learning'.
- Pupils are welcoming and polite. Their behaviour is always good in class, they move quietly and calmly around the school and are sensible at lunch time and during breaks.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities. Older pupils take their duties for looking after their younger school-mates very seriously, and are eager to get involved in decision making. This was evident through the well-thought-out speeches that they presented for the positions of head boy and girl as part of a special assembly during the inspection, and in the part that they played in the recent interviews for a new headteacher.
- Most pupils who spoke to inspectors said that behaviour is almost always good, and that bullying is rare, and always dealt with when reported to adults. The vast majority of parents are of this view too and so are the staff. However, a number of pupils said that, at times, offensive name calling takes place, and that this is not always heard by, or reported to adults.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are aware of most forms of discrimination, as one pupil commented, 'We are all the same inside and we should not judge people on what we see on the outside.'
- Pupils know how to stay safe while using computers, phones and hand-held games, and to never give out personal information over the internet. When asked what advice they would give to their younger school-mates about staying safe on the internet, one pupil commented, 'Only go onto websites which are age appropriate.'
- Pupils know about dangers and risks, because these matters are explored through relevant lessons. Visitors to the school help pupils to understand the dangers associated with fire, alcohol, drugs and smoking.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' behaviour is consistently well managed and record any incidents of poor behaviour. However, the systems used by the school, including its behaviour log, do not record such incidents in a consistent way and it is not always clear if matters are dealt with to

the satisfaction of parents.

The leadership and management are good

- Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are the best that they have been for a number of years. This is because the headteacher, supported by a very able senior leadership team, well-trained staff and informed governors has taken up the gauntlet, acted on, and successfully addressed the areas for improvement identified from the previous inspection.
- Pupils learn in stimulating surroundings of a high quality, with displays of their work and that of renowned artists. For example, a vast mural in the Early Years Foundation Stage encourages children to look closely to find the characters from numerous well-known nursery rhymes. For this, and other work, the school has secured the ArtsMark Gold Award.
- Middle managers, including subject coordinators, play an effective role in improving the quality of teaching and learning. They are well trained, and several have attained specialist qualifications which help them to improve mathematics and English. Subject coordinators regularly assess the quality of work and support colleagues in improving their teaching. However, the best practice in marking is not yet widely shared.
- All teachers have to meet challenging targets as part of their performance management. They are fully responsible for ensuring that all pupils make at least good progress. No teacher is considered for promotion or for a pay increase unless they can demonstrate that they have reached their targets.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are promoted well across the well-planned curriculum, although more needs to be done in this respect with regard to mathematics.
- The school's work in ensuring that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good is very effective. Pupils have visited Buddhist centres, synagogues, mosques and Christian places of worship. They benefit from visiting poets, artists and storytellers and visits to museums, sea-centres and zoos. Pupils are especially keen on their residential opportunities, which take place in various parts of the country.
- Pupils benefit from a broad range of extra-curricular activities including dodge-ball, cheer-leading, tennis and rugby. Senior leaders and governors ensure that the primary school sports fund is well spent to promote the health and well-being of pupils, and to help to develop teachers' skills in teaching various physical education activities.
- Key members of staff, including the school's learning mentors, ensure that attendance and punctuality are continually improving and that relations between the school and the local community are good. Parents are very complimentary about the breakfast club, which they say helps their children to make good progress in their learning.
- The school's relationship with the local authority is much more effective than at the time of the last inspection. Most recently the local authority has helped to improve the quality of governance.
- Safeguarding procedures are followed closely and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to doing all that they have to in order to support the school in becoming outstanding. They have taken on-board the areas for improvement identified from the previous inspection in earnest and now have a far better understanding of how well pupils are performing. However, their knowledge of how well the school performs in relation to others is not yet quite as precise as it should be. Governors know where the school's strengths lie, and what it needs to do to further improve because they all have class responsibilities, regularly come into school to observe teaching, speak to pupils about their learning and assess how well the school is doing through their new standards committee.
 - Governors know that the pupil premium is making a difference for eligible pupils. They have taken decisive action to appoint a new headteacher, supported the senior leadership team well and helped to ensure that staff morale has remained high throughout a challenging 18 months.

- Governors keep themselves abreast of new developments. The training that new governors have had through their induction programme has been effective in giving them a good understanding of their role and responsibilities.

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	105630
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	442370

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	445
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Critchlow
Headteacher	Joyce Willetts
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2012
Telephone number	0161 7705725
Fax number	0161 7705726
Email address	info@freehold.oldham.sch.uk

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