

Cobbs Brow School

Manfield, Ashurst, Skelmersdale, WN8 6SU

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding. Pupils start school with skills which are varied, but low overall in comparison to age-related expectations. They make outstanding progress across the school.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has improved. They make excellent progress and by the time they leave Year 6 their achievement is above average.
- The overall quality of teaching is outstanding. Learning activities demand much of pupils, but are well matched to pupils' ability. On occasion, pupils could be helped to reflect more deeply on what they learn and how well they are doing.
- Relationships between pupils and adults are very caring and ensure that all know they are respected in a highly inclusive school.
- Pupils are committed and highly engaged. Their desire to learn in lessons and their excellent application play a significant part in their success. They work well together, feel safe and are always exceptionally polite and respectful towards adults and one another.
- The school is attractive and very stimulating. Pupils respond to this and the presentation of their work is exemplary.
- The headteacher is supported well by the deputy headteacher and a dedicated team of staff and governors. Together, they provide a wonderful experience and an opportunity for every pupil to develop and flourish.
- The curriculum is greatly appreciated by the pupils, offering a range of rich, stimulating and exciting opportunities for all.
- Parents are very positive about the education their children receive and the progress they make. They also believe that their children are very safe and happy at school.
- The governors are totally committed to ensuring that the school is the best it can be. They hold the headteacher to account for all aspects of the school's continually improving performance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. They visited 17 teaching sessions.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to groups of pupils reading. They looked at work in pupils' books and the school's information showing pupils' progress.
- They looked at a range of documents provided by the school, including assessment information, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school action plans, leaders' view of the school's performance, records of the monitoring of lessons and information relating to teachers' performance management and professional development. The school website and records relating to safeguarding were also checked.
- The inspectors took account of 35 responses to the Ofsted online survey (Parent View), the school's analysis of a recent survey of parent views and spoke to parents informally. Inspectors also considered 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Platt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A lower than average proportion of pupils speaks English as an additional language.
- Pupils are mainly White British.
- A privately run before-school club and nursery operate from the school site and are inspected separately.
- In 2013, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve even further the quality of teaching to enhance pupils' already high achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - enabling pupils to evaluate even more sharply how well they are doing
 - encouraging pupils to think even more about what they are learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good and often outstanding progress, because good planning of activities during the year allows them to develop independence, explore their own ideas and develop effective basic skills.
- The rapid progress that children make in the Reception class continues into Years 1 and 2. The brisk pace of learning continues and pupils clearly enjoy their lessons, responding enthusiastically to the high expectations set by teachers.
- Overtime, pupils typically enter Key Stage 2 with at least average attainment. Assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2014 show that it has now risen to above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work and other inspection evidence indicate that this rise is likely to continue.
- Rapid progress continues in Years 3 to 6, because pupils are consistently given work that challenges and stretches them. Over half the pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in reading and mathematics in the yet to be validated 2014 tests at the end of Key Stage 2.
- School assessments and pupils' current work in Years 3 to 6 show that this trend of excellent achievement is set to continue.
- Reading is a strength. Results in the Year 1 phonics (letters and the sounds they make) check in the unvalidated 2014 results suggest that they were above the national average. This reflects the greater emphasis put on the teaching of phonics, so that pupils develop their skills to become fluent readers. Pupils enjoy reading and teachers plan a range of engaging activities to develop their reading skills. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about different authors and read widely across a range of literature, demonstrating a clear understanding of what they have read.
- Pupils who benefit from the pupil premium funding make exceptional progress. Within this group, the attainment of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals compared with other pupils in the school, is at least the same and often better in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make at least good, and often excellent, progress. This is due to them being given work which is well devised to meet their needs, and through being afforded very good support of additional adults.
- Progress in physical education is good. The school uses the primary school sport funding to employ specialist coaches to teach lessons, train teachers and run clubs. Pupils enjoy a range of sports and join in a range of inter-school sports competitions.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching over time is consistently at least good, with much that is outstanding. Progress in pupils' books and the school's assessment data indicate that the quality of teaching over time is outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of all pupils, and provide excellent role models to show pupils how to do their best. Lessons are planned effectively, ensuring that all groups of pupils are given suitably challenging tasks. Pupils learn quickly and achieve extremely well. Teachers have high expectations and, as a result of the good relationships between adults and children, pupils strive to meet these expectations.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that the children make a good start to their school life. Excellent use of the additional adults ensures that children have access to many different activities, which are engaging and allow them to make outstanding progress. For example, in learning about pirates the children developed a whole range of skills and knowledge. One group of children made outstanding progress as they were very skilfully challenged by their teacher in learning about the properties of shapes while they were involved in a treasure hunt around the school grounds.

- Pupils are highly involved in their learning, which enables them to rapidly develop skills and knowledge imparted by the teacher. They benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge, challenging questioning and high quality feedback in lessons. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and collaborate well to produce work of a high standard.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced by high quality and the purposeful application of information and communication technology (ICT). For example, Years 4 and 5 pupils worked diligently and collaboratively to make good choices about the best effects to support the making of a video. Their skills in ICT were well developed and they benefitted from considerable staff expertise.
- The teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and also for pupils whose first language is not English, is planned and organised well. The teacher with responsibility for these pupils is passionate about ensuring that all these pupils do well. The very well organised support for these pupils ensures that they learn very well.
- Pupils and teachers are rightly proud of their classrooms that are full of vivid and colourful displays, which support pupils' learning and celebrate their creative work.
- Marking and feedback are of a very high standard. This quality is evident across each year group and in every class. Pupils are given useful feedback from teachers, which enhances the quality of the work produced. However, what is not so consistently evident is that pupils are enabled to evaluate more sharply how well they are doing or for some to think more deeply about their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school and contribute a great deal to its success. They are active on the school council and the older pupils show great maturity in their work as play leaders and are always willing to take on additional responsibilities. Their academic success and the personal qualities they gain leave them exceptionally well prepared for the next stages of their education.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils say that behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. They are highly motivated, and want to learn. As a result, there is an exceptionally strong atmosphere for learning. Pupils take care of their work and present it neatly and in an organised way. Their positive attitudes contribute to the outstanding progress they make and they are very proud of what they achieve.
- Relationships in lessons are strong. Pupils know that their contribution to lessons is valued highly. As a result, they are confident and extremely keen to learn.
- Pupils understand about different kinds of bullying, for example, name-calling and homophobic bullying. They were clear that bullying does not occur. As one pupil said, 'Sometimes we fall out with our friends but we sort it out ourselves and we can talk to our teachers if we get upset.' School records confirm that bullying or harassment does not occur.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel extremely safe. They are taught to keep themselves safe through assemblies and excellent pastoral programmes, such as personal, social and health education.
- Pupils are confident that there is always someone on hand to help if they have a problem. Pupils know well how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including when using the Internet.
- Pupils attend school regularly. Attendance is above average and continuing to improve, because pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils are polite and welcoming, greet visitors and hold open doors. They move around the school quietly and sensibly, showing respect both for each other and for adults.
- Parents are very appreciative of what the school does to ensure that their children have a wonderful school life. All parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) said that their children are happy and feel safe in school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The leadership team has made the school a great success and is determined to make it even better. The headteacher is inspirational in her leadership and has led the school from good to outstanding with vision and determination. She is ably supported by a highly effective deputy headteacher and other senior leaders who, together with the governing body, have driven important improvements since the previous inspection.
- It is very much a team approach. Staff are highly motivated and are eager to make a contribution and support their colleagues. They say they feel very proud to belong to the school.
- Middle leaders are highly successful as a result of the clear leadership of the headteacher. They understand their responsibilities very well, consistently checking the quality of teaching and learning to help to enhance provision.
- The systematic checking on teaching and learning, including the quality of teachers' marking, is highly effective. Teachers are held to account through pupil progress meetings held with the senior leadership team which ensures that pupils continue to make the best possible progress.
- Staff have access to regular high-quality professional development that supports both them personally and the school's improvement. As one teacher commented, 'I have fantastic opportunities to help me improve as a teacher, both within my cluster and with my colleagues in school'.
- The rich and creative curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils well and makes an outstanding contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is enriched by visitors to the school, a range of trips, and opportunities for pupils to develop artistic, musical and sporting skills. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about their recent residential visit to Scarborough.
- An inclusive ethos is at the heart of the school's work and equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also promoted very well. The school provides pupils with a clear moral and social framework and promotes their understanding of cultural diversity well through assemblies, charity work and visits to a range of places of worship.
- The school benefits from involvement in the SHARES networks of schools, which provides a wealth of training for staff and educational experiences for the pupils. They have good links with local high schools and Edge Hill University. The local authority provides light-touch support to this excellent school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly effective, ensuring that it is composed of members with a wide range of different skills and experiences. It holds the school firmly to account. Governors have a clear and detailed overview of pupils' achievement, because they take regular opportunities through the year to examine data on how well pupils are doing. As a result, they understand how the current progress of pupils compares nationally. They receive regular reports on the quality of teaching and learning. These, along with information gained through their visits to school, enable them to play an active part in evaluating the school's work by asking questions from a well-informed standpoint. They use this information to ensure that any increase in teachers' salary is in relation to pupils' good or outstanding progress. Governors have produced a strategic plan for the use of the additional pupil premium funding. This is having a clear impact on pupils' achievement. They meet their statutory responsibilities and ensure that they attend relevant training, such as safeguarding. They are well informed about the finances of the school and ensure that the budget is used well.

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	119329
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	443909

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	275
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dominic Cullen
Headteacher	Annette Hirst
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2010
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