

Livesey Saint Francis' Church of England School

Cherry Tree Lane, Cherry Tree, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 5NX

Inspection dates 16–17 September 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From their starting points, pupils make good progress across the school and leave Year 6 having reached standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are above average.
- Progress across Key Stage 2 is particularly strong.
- Good quality questioning allows teachers to check what pupils already know and to plan lessons that help the pupils to learn more.
- Pupils are smart, enjoy school and are proud to be a pupil at St Francis. They willingly take on responsibilities and show courtesy and respect to each other.
- Parents and pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and say they have confidence in the school's systems for keeping everybody safe.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are usually positive. In the older classes, pupils' attitudes are often exemplary.
- The school promotes worthy values that help pupils to feel good about themselves and their achievements, and to get on well with others.
- The school's caring approach underpins every decision made and action taken by the school leadership team.
- Leaders, including governors, are aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and know what the school needs to do to improve further.
- Leaders' checks on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching have helped the school to maintain good standards of teaching and learning and drive improvements where necessary.
- The school's use of the primary sport funding has been used well and has brought many benefits to the pupils; including winning the county's Sports School of the Year award.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Children's progress in reading and writing in early years is slower than their progress in other areas of learning.
- Leaders' checks on children's learning in the early years are not as thorough as those made in other parts of the school.
- In Key Stage 1, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics are not always high enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 10 lessons taught by eight teachers and made several short visits to classrooms. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed, and spoke with, pupils during lessons, at break times and in the dining hall at lunchtime. They also met formally with groups of pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 and a group of prefects from Year 6.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders. A meeting also took place with members of the governing body and a telephone conversation was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including pupils' work in their books, the school's arrangements for safeguarding, performance management procedures, and the pupils' attendance data. Inspectors also looked at information about pupils' progress and attainment.
- Inspectors analysed 59 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to gauge the views of parents. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

Fiona McNally, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Martin Pye

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- A much smaller than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged. These pupils receive pupil premium funding as they are known to be eligible for free school meals or are children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement for 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 by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of provision in early years to accelerate children's progress, particularly in reading and writing, by:
 - increasing the rigour of the checks made on children's progress, so that up-to-date and accurate information is routinely used to plan children's next steps in learning
 - making sure leaders regularly check how well the newly introduced approach to teaching early reading and writing is working
 - ensuring that the good gains the youngest children make in their personal development translate into positive attitudes to learning in all areas of their learning and development.
- Raise standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1 by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve
 - always providing the right level of challenge to all pupils in lessons
 - making sure that the information gathered from checks on pupils' understanding and progress is used to provide guidance and activities that help them to push on with their learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and governors have high expectations of all staff. Staff say that there is a clear vision for the school and priorities for improvement are communicated well. Leaders regularly and rigorously check pupils' progress and, where it is not fast enough, they provide effective support; consequently, the achievement of pupils is good.
- Leaders also check that initiatives for supporting underachieving pupils are reviewed regularly and changes are made when further improvements have been needed.
- Teachers and other adults have regular opportunities to take on key responsibilities. The leaders have used the expertise in the school to support improvements in priority areas. For example, the improvements in the provision for pupils with special educational needs and for the monitoring of pupils' work came about after leaders' careful consideration of the staffing structure and a well-informed review of roles and responsibilities in school.
- Senior leaders, supported by middle leaders, have made a concerted and successful effort to improve the attainment and progress of pupils in reading and writing. As a result of new teaching strategies in these areas, and training for staff, the rates of pupils' progress in both these subjects have improved, particularly in Key Stage 2. Similarly, work to emphasise the importance of regular attendance and to make pupils and parents more accountable for lateness and poor attendance have resulted in improvements in this area.
- Teaching and books are regularly checked, and this has led to improvements in classroom practice and pupils' progress. Equally, the school has robust performance management systems in place which have given leaders an accurate understanding of the strengths in teaching and of the areas that still need further development.
- The school leaders evaluate the school's work accurately; they have correctly identified its strengths and equally, they are aware of the need for further improvement in the early years and in mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- The curriculum is a strength and promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The school's caring values are at the heart of all that it does and influence the way that subjects are organised, including opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom. The school has worked with pupils on developing their own cultural heritage, but pupils also have a good understanding of other faiths, beliefs and cultures. For example, pupils enjoy themed weeks and days, focusing on such events as Chinese New Year, Eid and the Second World War. These are brought into various parts of the curriculum and give pupils an understanding of how others live.
- The school leadership is mindful of the community it serves. It provides regular information to parents that supports parents' understanding of what their children do in school, and suggests ways they can help their children with their work at home. The vast majority of parents express positive views about the school's work.
- Leaders' use of the funding for disadvantaged pupils has had a good impact on these pupils' progress. It ensures that the eligible pupils are given extra support in the classroom and beyond, where necessary. For example, the school provides nurture sessions for pupils who find it difficult to manage their feelings and behaviour, which can inhibit their progress and enjoyment of school. Through actions such as this, the school demonstrates its care for all aspects of pupils' development and well-being.
- The additional primary school sport funding has been used to good effect. All pupils have benefited from specialist teaching and extra sporting activities which the school subsidises. As a result, the school has been involved in more competitions and, in 2013, won the Lancashire Sports School of the Year, which was a competition entered by primary and secondary schools in the area.
- The local authority agrees with the school's evaluation of its provision and performance. It is informed about what the school is doing well, where particular improvements have been made, and what is still to be done.
- Safeguarding procedures meet the statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and have a good understanding of the strengths in the school, including how improvements have been made. They are also aware of where improvements are needed. They are knowledgeable about the school's data which the headteacher reports to them regularly. This, in turn, means they are able to challenge senior leaders when necessary.
 - Governors are informed about the quality of teaching and the outcomes of teachers' performance management reviews. They are prepared to make tough decisions and any decisions relating to pay

progression are closely linked to reviews and pupils' progress.

- There is effective management of the school's financial resources by the governors. They know how funding for disadvantaged pupils is spent and can demonstrate how this funding makes a difference to these pupils.

Behaviour and Safety

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are positive. In the younger years, a small minority of pupils, often boys, need support to remain on task. However, as pupils get older and grow into the high expectations of the school, their attitude to learning improves and, in some cases, is exemplary.
- Pupils of all ages report that they enjoy learning and that their teachers make learning interesting and fun. They also enjoy the many opportunities for trips and special events which feed into their learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they can always talk to an adult when they need to. For pupils in Years 5 and 6, there is a drop-in area at lunchtime, which is always staffed, and pupils can go there if they need to talk to someone about any matters which are worrying or upsetting them.
- Pupils, parents and staff all say that poor behaviour is rare. Pupils say this is because they know what sanctions are in place and want to avoid them. Equally, pupils like the rewards of receiving house points or being nominated as 'Pupil of the Week', which are given for behaving well or for doing something particularly special or thoughtful in class or on the playground.
- The school has identified eight core values which all pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 understand very well. They can relate these values to the activities they do and to how they should behave. Pupils feel a strong sense of identity with their school and fellow pupils, and are extremely proud of their school.
- Recently, the school has brought in a system of prefects led by a head boy and head girl in Year 6. They have several areas of responsibility including monitoring behaviour at social times in different areas of the school. The pupils have been well trained and talk intelligently and sensitively about the importance of their role. If any misbehaviour is reported to them, they usually offer pupils a second chance but also have the authority to sanction them by removing house points. Equally, they can award house points for good behaviour. The other pupils in the school are very positive about this new system, saying they see the prefects as helpful people to talk to, alongside the adults. The respect shown by the pupils for each other is exemplary and reinforces the pride they take in their school. The head boy reported that he loves his new role because he knows he is helping St Francis Primary to be the best it can be.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, for example cyber-bullying and prejudiced-based bullying. They say that bullying is very rare and this is because it is dealt with quickly by adults. Documents kept to record incidents of bullying show that this is the case.
- Attendance remains above average and this is due to the diligence of the headteacher who works closely with families where attendance is an issue. This is done sensitively and in a way that helps the families to understand the importance of bringing their children to school every day. Leaders have made a concerted effort to make improvements in punctuality which is improving steadily.
- Pupils wear the school uniform smartly at all times. The Year 6 pupils have recently changed their uniform; they wear it with pride and stand out as good role models. The classrooms and other areas around the school are tidy and well organised.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Over time, the quality of teaching is good. This is seen in the work in pupils' books, the checks on teaching made by school leaders and by the progress made by pupils currently in the school and by those who left recently.
- Teachers' questioning is a particular strength in the school, especially in Key Stage 2. Teachers are skilful at eliciting information and full explanations and reasons from pupils when questioning them. In turn, this gives teachers a clear understanding of what pupils have learnt and allows them to plan future lessons well and imaginatively.
- Work set for pupils is usually pitched at the right level and this allows pupils to do their best and be fully engaged in their learning. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show that pupils have regular opportunity to do interesting and enjoyable activities that require them to apply their skills in a variety of contexts. Teachers provide specific resources to offer challenge to the most able and support the least able. Nevertheless, while Key Stage 1 mathematics teaching helps pupils to build up their knowledge and

skills in a logical order, the level of challenge and expectations of what they will get done in lessons sometimes lack ambition.

- Teaching in reading and writing in both Key Stages 1 and 2 has been a recent priority for improvement and this has clearly brought benefits. Pupils regularly write at length and in a variety of styles. Pupils enjoy the topics covered in their writing activities and this is evident from the pride they take in their work. Pupils have regular opportunities to read and are given guidance and support when choosing books to take home. Pupils and parents are expected to read together and reading records are used well. In class, older pupils are tasked with regular reading comprehension activities to ensure they understand different genres of books and develop a passion for books. Pupils who read for the inspectors were excited about reading and talked enthusiastically about why they enjoyed different authors.
- Teachers mark pupils' books regularly and offer pupils useful feedback which pupils are expected to respond to; and they do. Teachers routinely identify spelling and grammar errors for pupils to correct and learn from and this results in pupils having very strong results in their spelling and grammar tests at the end of Year 6. The well-informed guidance makes a significant contribution to pupils' good progress, especially in writing where marking is particularly effective. Marking and the use of information about pupils' progress in mathematics, especially in Key Stage 1, is not always used to drive learning forward as swiftly as possible.
- Pupils are expected to work hard and they are very good at moving between tasks with minimum fuss and noise. Older pupils are better at this than the younger ones and, as a result, very little learning time is wasted in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils work in an open-plan environment with three classes in close proximity. This can lead to some potential distractions for the pupils, but they cope extremely well and usually remain focused on their work.
- Teaching assistants work well with pupils with special educational needs, resulting in strong achievement for these pupils. In addition, where teaching assistants have a more general role they are clear about learning objectives and support pupils well, questioning them skilfully and guiding them to make improvements in their work.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching requires improvement. Children's understanding is not always checked as regularly as it is in the older classes and their learning, therefore, is not moved on at an appropriate pace, particularly in reading and writing.

Achievement of the pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well in Key Stages 1 and 2. Many children start school in the Reception class with skills which are typical for their age. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and leave with above-average standards in all these subjects. This means pupils' achievement is good overall.
- By the end of Reception, children's reading and writing skills are not as well developed as those seen in other areas of learning; many pupils start Year 1 with below average skills in these key areas. Nevertheless, in Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in reading and writing because the school staff give a lot of attention to these areas of learning. However, their progress in mathematics is not as fast. Inspection evidence shows that one cause of this slower progress in mathematics is because school staff have focused on boosting literacy standards and have let expectations of pupils' achievement in mathematics slip slightly.
- In Key Stage 2, however, pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics has been consistently strong over recent years and, more recently, this has also been the case in reading and writing. A much higher than average proportion of the Year 6 pupils who left the school in 2014 exceeded expectations in all three areas. Pupils currently in Key Stage 2 are also making good progress.
- Over time, reading in Key Stage 1 has been a strong area of achievement for all groups of pupils. In 2013, a higher than average proportion of pupils reached the expected level in the phonics (letters and sounds) screening check than was seen nationally. In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the expectation for their age dipped; however, considering their reading levels at the start of Year 1, this still represented good achievement. Across the school pupils have opportunities to develop their reading skills in class and across different subjects.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points to the end of Year 6. These pupils make progress that is at least in line with peers and, at times, they make better progress than others in the school. The support provided to these pupils, where necessary, means the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others closes during their time in school. In the last set of published results for Key Stage 2, disadvantaged pupils were only half a term behind their in-school peers in reading, writing and mathematics. The same results show that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils' at St Francis was

very similar to that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally, being less than half a term behind them in English and mathematics.

- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. This has been a particular focus for development recently, which has resulted in stronger progress for these pupils. The gap in attainment between these pupils and their peers in school has closed considerably.
- The most able pupils currently in school, and those who left recently, make good progress over time. The level of challenge provided in most classes helps their progress so that they achieve in line with their capabilities. In Key Stage 2, some of the most able pupils do exceptionally well.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language, make progress in line with, and sometimes better than, their peers. The achievement of different groups of pupils shows that the school is committed to ensuring all pupils have equal opportunities to make good progress during their time in the school.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Most children start school with skills and knowledge typical for their age. However, in recent years, the proportion starting with skills below those typical for their age has increased, particularly in speaking, number, and managing behaviour.
- In several areas of learning, children of all abilities make good progress but in the key areas of reading and writing, progress is not good enough and consequently, a sizeable group of children, including those with who are most and least able, are not as well prepared for Year 1 as they could be.
- While progress in reading and writing could be better, children make good gains in their personal development. The school's strong attention to polite behaviour and respect for others helps all pupils to develop considerate and helpful attitudes and, as a result, poor behaviour is rare.
- Children trust the older pupils to look after them, and they do. Adults are firm yet kindly and parents say staff are friendly and approachable and appreciate the good communication between home and school. The school's procedures for helping children to settle in, and to feel safe, when they first start school work well.
- Levels of care and supervision are good and children feel safe indoors and outside. They enjoy all the activities on offer and are always busy. Nevertheless, over time, girls make better progress overall than boys. In the classroom, boys are often drawn towards physical activities and some find it hard to settle to tasks or cooperate with others. This means that some boys do not develop conscientious work habits or make the most of their abilities.
- The school's leaders know that the early years provision is not as effective as it could be. The assessment of children's progress in early years lacks rigour in some areas. School leaders are aware that this part of the school's work needs to be improved in order to ensure that the youngest children are given every opportunity to do as well as possible.

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	119423
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	448827

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Rushton
Headteacher	Mrs S Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2010
Telephone number	01254 201419
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