

Seven Stars Primary School

Peacock Hall Road, Leyland, Lancashire, PR25 1TD

Inspection dates 22–23 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in reading, writing and especially mathematics are not high enough.
- Teaching has not ensured that pupils have made consistently good progress over time across the school, especially the most able.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, and the work set is not always challenging enough.
- Pupils are not always given clear enough guidance in teachers' marking about what they need to do to improve their work, and there are too few checks to ensure that pupils respond to advice when it is given.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems.
- Subject leaders are not yet fully accountable for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility.
- Some governors' understanding and use of data about pupils' performance are not as good as they might be, and governors do not routinely evaluate their own performance.
- Outdoor provision in the early years is not as well developed as the indoor provision, and this hampers children's creativity and imagination.
- Changes introduced by school leaders have not yet had sufficient time to have a full impact to ensure that teaching is consistently good and pupils achieve well over time.

The school has the following strengths

- Vulnerable pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are very well supported in a caring, nurturing environment and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. They are keen to learn and do well. They feel safe and are well cared for in school.
- The school develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Parents are strongly supportive of the school.
- School leaders, including governors, have an accurate picture of what the school needs to do to improve, and are working well with the local authority to bring this about as quickly as possible.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons or part lessons.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and with four 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 to 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 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 information about teachers' performance. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements. Minutes of governing body meetings were also considered.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and 63 responses to the school's own questionnaire. They also considered 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in seven single year group classes from the Reception Year to Year 6, as well as the Nursery.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- Around three-quarters of pupils are disadvantaged and therefore eligible for the pupil premium. (This funding is provided to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority). This proportion is well 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 above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at other than usual times is above 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better, in order to raise pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics and for the most able pupils, by making sure that:
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high enough
 - the work set is always hard enough so that pupils are consistently challenged to achieve the highest standards and make the best possible progress
 - pupils are always given very clear guidance in teachers' marking about what they need to do to improve their work, and that checks are made to ensure that they respond to this advice
 - there are more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems both in mathematics lessons and in different subjects.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - school leaders continue to build on the improvements they have already brought about
 - subject leaders are more involved and accountable for making checks and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas
 - more governors have good skills in the use and analysis of pupils' performance data, and that they routinely evaluate their own performance.
- Improve the early years provision by:
 - making sure that the current good practice becomes firmly established across the Nursery and Reception classes
 - developing learning outdoors to provide opportunities for children to be creative and to use their imagination.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are not good, although they are improving.
- Following the disappointing results in 2013, school leaders have taken action to raise standards, and this has led to improved results in 2014. However, their actions have not yet led to consistently good teaching and good progress over time throughout the school.
- School leaders analyse data about pupils' progress and achievement effectively. They have a clear view of how well the school is performing and where it needs to do better.
- School improvement planning correctly identifies the key priorities and focuses on improving teaching in order to raise achievement. For example, there are clear plans in place to improve teaching and raise standards in mathematics, and to improve the achievement of the most able pupils.
- Senior leaders closely monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and subject leaders effectively check and evaluate pupils' performance in their areas. However, subject leaders are not yet fully accountable for making checks and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their areas.
- Information about pupils' performance is used to provide pupils with extra help and support if they need it. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are now making more rapid progress, and pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs achieve well. Consequently any gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils in the school are closing. This shows the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Information about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement is used to check how well teachers are performing, and to identify where further training and support are needed. It is also used when making recommendations about teachers' pay.
- Staff are working increasingly successfully to share best practice within the school, and also have opportunities to observe outstanding teaching in other local schools.
- The curriculum is well planned, engages pupils effectively in their learning and promotes good behaviour. It is enriched by a range of activities, clubs, trips and visits. This term for example, as part of a reading week, an author visited the school to inspire pupils' story writing, and Year 6 pupils attended an outdoor activities centre.
- Pupils take on responsibility in a variety of roles, for example as members of the school and eco councils; and older pupils support younger children during lunchtime and on the playground. These all contribute to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and effective.
- The school is using the additional primary school physical education and sport funding successfully. Specialist coaches teach lessons, run activities and train staff. Consequently, more pupils are involved in sports activities and the school participates in more sporting competitions than previously. This is having a positive impact on pupils' physical well-being and healthy lifestyles.
- The local authority is providing increased monitoring and support for the school, and this is helping the school to move forward.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well-informed about the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' behaviour. Some governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the analysis and use of data about pupils' performance, but this is not as widespread as it might be across all members. Governors contribute to the school's self-evaluation, but they do not routinely evaluate their own performance. Nevertheless, governors have a clear view of how well the school is doing and where it needs to improve. In particular, they recognise the need to raise achievement in mathematics and for the most able pupils.
 - Governors hold the school to account by asking searching questions and by setting challenging targets as part of the headteacher's appraisal. They also make sure that pupils' achievement is taken into account when making decisions about teachers' pay. They have a good knowledge of how the pupil premium is spent, and have asked probing questions about the impact it is having. They manage the school's finances effectively, and make sure that the school meets its statutory duties, including those related to safeguarding.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are keen to do well and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are typically polite and considerate, and get on well with one another and with adults in the school.
- Pupils say that they enjoy lessons and that teachers try to make learning fun and interesting. As a result lessons typically run smoothly and without interruption.
- Inspectors observed good behaviour in lessons and around the school. Pupils play sensibly and safely on the playground during break, and behave well in the hall at lunchtime.
- Pupils say that behaviour has improved and is usually good. They say that sometimes some pupils fall out, although staff act quickly to sort this out.
- School records show that there are relatively few instances of poor behaviour, including racist or discriminatory incidents. If pupils do misbehave, staff act appropriately, consistently and effectively.
- A small number of pupils sometimes show challenging behaviour, but staff manage this consistently and well. These pupils are supported in a very caring and nurturing way, often by specialist staff. This leads to improvements in their behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved and is around average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and well cared for. They say, 'If we have a problem the school sorts it out.' They understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including personal safety and when using the internet.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of different types of bullying, and understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying is very rare in school, but are confident that staff would sort it out quickly if it occurred.
- School leaders and staff work closely with parents and outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are safe and secure.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey think that their children are safe and well looked after at school. Inspection evidence supports this view.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not ensure that pupils make consistently good progress and achieve well across the school over time, particularly in mathematics. School records and other inspection evidence show that teaching is improving, and this is leading to acceleration in pupils' progress.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve have not always been high enough over time to ensure pupils acquire competent skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The work set has not always been hard enough to challenge pupils to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress, particularly the most able pupils. As a result, progress has been too slow and pupils have not achieved as well as they might have.
- The quality of marking and assessment is variable. Staff mark pupils' work regularly, and use praise effectively. However, pupils are not always given clear enough guidance about what they need to do to improve their work, and there are too few checks that pupils respond to this advice when it is given.
- Where pupils learn well, staff have high expectations and set challenging work that engages pupils in their learning. For example, in mathematics, Year 2 pupils were developing their skills of addition and problem solving. The work was challenging and set at the right level for different pupils. All pupils were fully involved and keen to learn, and questioning was used very skilfully to check and deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils had to think hard about what they were doing and made excellent progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to support the learning of pupils who need extra help. This includes those who are disadvantaged or who are disabled or have special educational needs. Extra help is provided in the classroom or in individual or small-group sessions. Vulnerable pupils are particularly well supported and this helps them to achieve well and make good progress.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are not high enough, especially in mathematics, and too few pupils achieve well.
- At the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been improving, although they remain below average. In 2013 they were well below average in reading, and below average in writing and mathematics. Preliminary results for 2014 show improved standards in reading, but falls in writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been variable. In 2012 they were around average. In 2013 they fell sharply to below average in writing and well below average in reading and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who made the progress expected of them was above average in writing, but well below average in reading and mathematics. The proportion that made more than the expected progress was well above average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics.
- Preliminary results for 2014 show a marked rise in the standards achieved by Year 6 pupils in reading, a slight rise in mathematics, and a slight fall in writing. However, standards overall are likely to remain below average, especially in mathematics. The progress made by these pupils has improved, and the proportion making the progress expected and more than expected progress is likely to be close to or above average, especially in reading.
- Pupils have a sound and improving knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) because teaching is improving and they have many opportunities to read. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics check was well below average in 2013, although it improved to around average in 2014.
- Pupils are now making steady progress in writing because they have many opportunities to write in a variety of styles in different subjects, and there is a suitable emphasis on spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils' basic skills in mathematics are increasingly secure, but there are too few opportunities for them to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems in mathematics lessons and in other subjects. This hampers their ability to reach higher standards by the end of Key Stage 2.
- There is evidence that pupils are now beginning to make better progress across the school because the quality of teaching is improving. However, the work in pupils' books and the school's systems for checking how well pupils are doing show that there are still inconsistencies in the progress made by different groups of pupils in different year groups and subjects.
- In 2013, attainment reached by disadvantaged Year 6 pupils was over a year behind other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, and about two terms behind in writing. There were too few pupils not eligible for the pupil premium in the year group to make in-school comparisons possible. School data show that the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and those nationally is closing as achievement improves.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress. Their needs are accurately identified and they receive good quality support from teachers, teaching assistants and support staff.
- The most able pupils achieve higher standards than their classmates, but too few of them reach the highest standards and make good progress. This is because they are not always given work that is challenging enough.

The early years provision**requires improvement**

- Most children join the early years with skills and knowledge that are generally below those typical for their age.
- Recent staffing difficulties slowed the progress that children made last year, and meant that the assessment and checking of children's progress were not as thorough as they might have been.
- All staff are now eager to ensure that they contribute fully to raising children's achievement. The quality of teaching has improved, and staff make sure that learning is purposeful. Children play, explore and work on activities that challenge them to develop their skills. As a result, they are now making more rapid progress in all areas of their learning.
- In the Nursery, for example, children were developing their understanding of sounds. Staff used a variety

of resources very effectively and children were fully involved in exploring, producing and recognising different sounds. Questioning was used very skilfully to extend children's learning and they greatly enjoyed the activities.

- Staff make good use of the indoor and outdoor learning areas. However, the outdoor provision is less well developed than indoors, and this hampers children's creativity and imagination in particular.
- The recording and assessment of children's progress have improved, and staff use this information to plan activities to challenge children further. The needs of individual children are met and they are now making better progress. This includes disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those most in need and those for whom the school receives additional funding.
- There are close working relationships with parents and with other nursery providers, and with outside agencies. These ensure that children make a smooth transition to the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Children are well-motivated and show good attitudes to learning in a safe and nurturing environment. The early years provision makes a good contribution to children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders have reacted very positively to the difficulties of last year. Staff work well together as a team and now have an accurate view of how well children are progressing and where further improvements need to be made.

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	119285
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	448508

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	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Hill
Headteacher	Mike Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	21 April 2010
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