

Pendle Primary Academy

Walter Street, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 5AW

Inspection dates 11–12 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is improving rapidly. By the end of Year 6 in 2014, pupils attained broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics, from low starting points on entry to Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is consistently good across the school, including in the early years. This is enabling pupils to learn well and eliminating the legacy of underachievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They enjoy school and work hard because the school has helped them believe that they can achieve.
- The school ensures that pupils attain the necessary skills in reading, writing and mathematics to be ready for secondary school.
- Pupils' learning is enriched by meaningful and exciting visits and experiences that help them understand the world and respect the people in it.
- The children in the early years get a good start to their education and discover a love of learning.
- The school is led by an inspirational principal whose belief that pupils deserve the best education possible has driven the many improvements that have occurred since she was appointed.
- Other senior leaders support the principal well, providing strong and effective leadership for key aspects of the school's work.
- Senior leaders make rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning and use what they find to plan further improvements. Middle leaders contribute well to this work.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Vulnerable pupils are well cared for and supported. Pupils are taught how to recognise dangers and to be responsible citizens.
- The school supports disadvantaged pupils very well, ensuring that they succeed as well as others and participate fully in what is offered.
- Governors are a strong and highly effective team that adds an additional layer of rigour and strengthens the school's capacity to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The legacy of underachievement is still evident in the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2. Consequently, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are not yet high enough.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not as consistently rapid as in reading and writing.
- Not enough children attain a good level of development by the end of Reception.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. They listened to pupils read, analysed their work and checked the school's data about their attainment and progress.
- Inspectors had three formal discussions with pupils and spoke to others informally in lessons and at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors had discussions with the school's senior and middle leaders. Meetings were held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, the school's improvement partner and a representative of the academy's sponsor. Inspectors spoke to the local Imam and two officers from the local constabulary.
- A range of documentation was analysed, including the school's own evaluation of its work, safeguarding documents, records of pupils' behaviour and attendance and information about teachers' performance.
- Inspectors took account of 25 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). They spoke to a number of parents as they brought their children to school.
- The views of 25 staff who responded to the staff questionnaire were considered.

Inspection team

Margot D'Arcy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

Mark Williams

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The academy is larger than the average-sized primary school. It opened in March 2013. When its predecessor school was last inspected, it was judged to require special measures.
- The academy is part of Pendle Education Trust sponsored by Nelson and Colne College. The principal took up her substantive, full-time, position in June 2013.
- The majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage. On entry to the school's reception class, a very high proportion of children speak little or no English. Throughout the rest of the school, a significant minority of pupils are also at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is above average (pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and who are in the care of the local authority).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special education needs is above average.
- Children in the two Reception classes attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue the drive to raise achievement, so that
 - by the end of Reception, significantly more children attain a good level of development
 - by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is at least in line with the national average and any variation in attainment between groups, such as boys and girls, narrows
 - the progress of Key Stage 2 pupils in mathematics is as consistently rapid as it is in reading and writing and standards of attainment in this subject by the end of Year 6 continue to rise.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school's principal is an inspirational leader. Her resolute and unwavering focus on ensuring that all pupils reach their potential, have high aspirations of what they can achieve in their lives and of what they can contribute to society has brought about a 'sea change' in this school. Pupils, parents and key figures and groups in the community all agree that the transformation in this school has been remarkable.
- The principal receives very good support from her assistant principals and from a highly astute and skilled governing body. These leaders' vision and dedication to improving pupils' academic achievement and ensuring that they become responsible members of society, appreciating British values and being guided by a clear understanding of right and wrong, fuel everything that is done and is shared by all staff.
- The school's values, ethos and commitment to equality of opportunity have a high profile. These are very evident in practice from both staff and pupils. Expectations of pupils' behaviour, hard work, good attendance and punctuality are high and have led to good improvements. Similarly high expectations are set for teachers and teaching assistants, who are required to be good role models for pupils' behaviour and spoken language, as well as enabling them to achieve their best.
- Leaders make rigorous and regular checks on the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils and on how well teaching, including from teaching assistants, is helping pupils to learn well. Teaching staff are set challenging targets for raising achievement, with training, appraisal processes and staff salary progression linked closely to how successfully these targets are met.
- Although the legacy of underachievement is still evident in some pupils' attainment, leaders have been very successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning. There is no weak teaching in any part of the school. As a result, pupils are quickly making up lost ground so that by the end of Year 6 they are attaining similarly to pupils of the same age nationally.
- The most rapid progress has been in reading and writing. This is where leaders have concentrated their efforts, alongside the continual promotion of pupils' speaking skills and understanding of English. While there has also been good improvement in mathematics, with Year 6 pupils attaining broadly average standards in the 2014 national tests, attainment in this subject was lower than in reading and writing and fewer pupils made more than expected progress.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Leaders make meticulous interrogation of data about pupils' achievements. They make regular checks on pupils' books and on how well they are learning in lessons. These steps allow leaders to pinpoint, exactly, where improvement is needed for particular groups and individuals. Nothing goes unnoticed. With almost regimental strategy, action is put in place to tackle any underachievement and close any noticeable gaps between the achievements of different groups.
- This rigour has underpinned the success so far in raising achievement and enables leaders to identify the right priorities to continue to do so and thereby completely eliminate the legacy of underachievement inherited when the school became an academy.
- Middle leaders are involved in a range of activities to check on and improve the quality of provision in their areas of responsibility. They talk knowledgeably about the impact of their work and what is needed to raise achievement further.
- School leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils' learning is based on a range of rich, first-hand and memorable experiences that promote fascination with learning and develop pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Thoughtful planning, including regular homework, ensures a strong focus on the basics of literacy and numeracy. Pupils have lots of opportunities to be creative, develop computing and sporting skills and learn about the world in which they live. Literacy skills are promoted particularly well in a range of subjects. A good range of quality out-of-school activities enhances pupils' learning, including 'start-of-the-day challenges' for all pupils.
- The additional money the school receives to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to this end. The additional funding to promote physical education and sport has enabled highly skilled coaches to be employed to lead teaching and improve learning in this subject. The skills of the support staff who assisted the coaches have been enhanced and this is to be extended to teaching staff to enable the high quality provision to be sustained in the future.
- The school works relentlessly to involve parents in their children's education and keep them informed about their progress and behaviour. The vast majority of parents speak very highly of the school's work and value what it provides for their children.
- Strong partnerships exist with key support agencies to promote pupils' education, safety and well-being. Some particularly effective links have been established with other schools, including one of the nursery

provisions attended by children prior to beginning in the Reception class, and the schools to which Year 6 pupils transfer when they leave. Community links have also been strengthened.

- The local authority and academy trust board have provided good support for school leaders on a range of issues, including staffing, self-evaluation and training.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governance is highly effective. Governors bring a range of expertise and use this exceptionally well to evaluate the school's effectiveness. Governors have a thorough understanding of achievement data and use their analyses to ask searching questions about pupils' performance in different subjects, parts of the school and the achievement of different groups. Governors are rightly proud of how much has been accomplished since the school became an academy and are also acutely aware of what still needs to be done for the academy to be 'outstanding'.
- Governors ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met. They are dedicated to ensuring that the school actively promotes and celebrates British values and tackles discrimination. Each member of staff has an appraisal target to this end and there has been staff training about how to identify and prevent radicalisation; governors have also involved parents in this training.
- Governors visit lessons and look at pupils' books and make the right connections between the impact of teaching on learning. They ensure that salary progression for teaching staff is firmly linked to pupils' outcomes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. In discussions with inspectors, pupils were frank about their views on behaviour. They know that it is not perfect. Pupils recognise that there will always be occasional squabbles and that some pupils find it particularly difficult to manage their behaviour. However, they are clear that the school's high expectations of behaviour have improved things and they like this change.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and cared for by the staff, who they like, admire and trust. They have a good understanding about different types of bullying and explain that such behaviour is very rare at the school. Pupils have a comprehensive understanding about safe use of technology and the Internet.
- The pupils have been taught about inappropriate behaviour and language linked to prejudice. They value what they have learnt and are very clear about the immorality of this type of behaviour and the hurt it causes. They have a sharp insight into British values, recounting various democratic opportunities provided by the school for them to share their views and appoint ambassador representatives. Some talked about visiting the war memorial and showing respect for the soldiers who had died, by keeping silent for two minutes.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They say that they are 'honoured' to wear the school's 'Shine' logo on their uniform. Their explanation of what this stands for - '*Safe, Here, Inspired, Neighbourly and Excellent*' is heartfelt.
- Key Stage 2 pupils are overflowing with examples of how things have improved since the principal arrived. These include more challenging work, exciting visits that give them a better understanding of the world, a belief that their teachers want to help them achieve their best and to treat everyone kindly and respect their beliefs. One Year 6 pupil said that he would be sad to leave the school. Another said that she would like to 'salute' the person who made the school into an academy because it is now so much better.
- In lessons, pupils concentrate hard, do their best and take pride in their work. They treat staff respectfully and work amicably together. Pupils are polite to visitors and move around the school sensibly. At break times play is often boisterous, but good natured.
- Pupils happily undertake a wide range of responsibilities. Ambassadors from Years 1 to 6 have worked with one of the senior leaders to determine the responsibilities expected of all children who attend the academy. Older pupils 'give back' to the school by leading 'family dining' for the most vulnerable pupils, providing very good models for these pupils' social and moral behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Thorough and rigorous checks are undertaken assess risks to pupils' safety and records are detailed and precise.
- The high expectations for attendance have resulted in good improvements, so that standards are now slightly above the national average. There are no exclusions.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to confide any worries they might have and to counsel and support pupils who are experiencing personal difficulties.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils' work and the school's regular assessments of their attainment and progress show that the quality of teaching is good in all parts of the school and has improved since the academy opened.
- Teachers plan lessons to get the best out of all their pupils. They evaluate their lessons thoughtfully and take on board the feedback they receive from school leaders to improve their work and ensure that they are doing their part in improving pupils' learning.
- Teachers employ a wide range of strategies to promote good learning. For example, when new ideas are being introduced, pupils who grasp these quickly are given work to deepen their understanding, while pupils who are unsure receive extra help. This was evident in a number of mathematics lessons in both key stages, such as Year 2 pupils' work on division and Year 6 pupils' work on algebra.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain things clearly, often using rhymes and catchy phrases to help pupils remember grammatical rules and mathematical strategies more easily. Teachers pitch their questions to ensure that pupils of all abilities can answer. They expect pupils to complete a good amount of work in the time they allocate and to present their work well.
- Reading and writing skills, including phonics (letters and the sounds they make), are taught well and teachers ensure that pupils have good opportunities to practise these in their other work. This was evident in Year 3 pupils' 'Revolting Recipes' and older pupils' newspaper accounts of the school's 'Lancashire Day', which included a visit from the mayor.
- The teaching of mathematics is good overall, with some high quality teaching that moves learning on quickly, particularly for the most-able pupils. Teachers are providing good opportunities for pupils to develop mathematical vocabulary and to use this effectively to solve mathematical word problems. Opportunities to practise numeracy skills in other subjects are evident, but not as plentiful as for literacy.
- Teachers' and teaching assistants' excellent relationships with pupils is another key factor that helps pupils learn well. Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed, both in lessons and to teach specific learning programmes, such as 'additional English' for pupils at an early stage of acquisition.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are included fully in lessons and are supported well in their learning. The pupils benefit from working in small groups with teachers or teaching assistants, which helps them to make good progress and promotes their confidence and belief in themselves as effective learners.
- Marking and feedback to pupils about their work is a strong aspect of the teaching. Teachers balance praise and challenge well to help pupils achieve their targets. Pupils respond to teachers' comments and enjoy this part of their learning.
- The vast majority of pupils know how to improve their work. They are aware of the targets they must reach in reading, writing and mathematics to reach the next 'level' and are keen to do better.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The overwhelming majority of pupils are making rapid progress and the legacy of underachievement is being eliminated. Throughout the school, pupils' work and the school's accurate assessments of their achievement show that attainment is rising.
- The 2014 national test and assessment results of Year 6 pupils were testament to the changing tide of achievement at this school. Pupils attained broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics; attainment in grammar, punctuation and spelling was also average.
- These results are a significant achievement, given the pupils' low standards of attainment on beginning Key Stage 2. Pupils' achievement in reading and writing was particularly impressive, with almost all pupils making the progress expected of them and over half doing better than this. This good achievement was evident for all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, and reflected the strong focus given to improving pupils' literacy skills to ensure that they are well prepared for secondary school.
- While Year 6 pupils' mathematics results showed good improvement, attainment was lower than in reading and writing. Progress at the expected level and above was similar to that of pupils nationally. The vast majority of disadvantaged pupils made the progress expected of them, but the proportion doing better than this was not as high as in reading and writing.
- The school does well for its disadvantaged pupils. The 2014 Year 6 results showed no discernible difference between the attainment of these pupils and others at the school in reading and writing or in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Disadvantaged pupils were about five months behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading and four months behind in writing, grammar, punctuation and

spelling. In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils were around four months behind other pupils at the school and 10 months behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

- The most-able pupils are clearly identified and work is planned to ensure that they achieve their potential. Almost a third of the Year 6 pupils who took the tests and assessments in 2014 attained the higher levels in writing and mathematics and slightly more attained the higher level in reading. While these proportions are lower than those attained by pupils nationally, the difference is not significant and, given that none of the Year 6 pupils had attained highly at the end of Key Stage 1, these outcomes are noteworthy. Similarly, just over half of the pupils attained the higher level in the grammar, punctuation and spelling tests, which matched the attainment of pupils nationally.
- Year 1 pupils' work shows that the accelerated progress made by Reception children towards the end of the year has been sustained. In 2014, virtually all groups of pupils attained above average scores in the Year 1 phonics check, including disadvantaged pupils. These pupils, who are now in Year 2, are using phonic skills well in their reading.
- The attainment of Year 2 pupils in the 2014 national assessments was significantly below average in reading, writing and mathematics and reflected the legacy of underachievement. However, from their very low attainment at the end of Reception, the assessments showed that pupils had made good progress, with over half attaining securely at the expected level in all subjects. While attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is not yet high enough, the 2014 assessments were better than in previous years and resulted in attainment on entry to Key Stage 2 being higher than has been the case historically.
- Although Year 2 pupils' use of phonics is good, many pupils' developing acquisition of English limits the depth of their understanding when reading. This can also be the case for Key Stage 2 pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English. Similarly, while calculation skills are well embedded throughout the school, the depth of understanding of mathematical language and ideas for pupils whose understanding of English is not secure impacts on their achievement in mathematics, particularly their competence in solving word problems.
- Despite these issues, pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition are making good progress in learning the language.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and capabilities. Close tracking of each pupil's achievement ensures that they receive tailored support programmes, which result in them making good progress.

The early years provision

is good

- The majority of children begin the Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning that are below those typical for their age. The attainment of a notable proportion of children is significantly below what is typical for their age. Children's personal and social development and their physical skills are particularly poor. Moreover, as many children are at a very early stage of learning English when they start, their communication and language skills in English are weak.
- The school's assessments of children's attainment when they begin the early years are rigorous and accurate. School leaders and early years practitioners are clear that the vast majority of the children do not have learning difficulties. Therefore a rich and stimulating range of activities is provided to help overcome barriers to learning and promote good development of essential skills, including the acquisition of English.
- In response to good teaching, interesting indoor and outdoor activities and caring staff, the children quickly grow to love school. They gain confidence and learn how to share and consider the needs of others. Throughout each day, staff continually promote and extend children's use and understanding of English. They speak in clear sentences, helping the children to learn the structure of English, as well as the meanings of words and phrases. Bilingual staff aid this process throughout the day and during specific 'additional English' sessions.
- Despite children's good progress, their attainment by the end of Reception last year was much lower than children of the same age nationally, with less than a fifth attaining a good level of development. However, many of these children were particularly young and their understanding of some key ideas, for example, in mathematics, was affected by their, still developing, understanding of English.
- Analysis of Year 1 pupils' work confirms that there was an acceleration of progress for these children towards the end of their reception year, which improved the overall picture of their attainment on entry to Key Stage 1. The attainment of the current group of reception children suggests that attainment on entry to Key Stage 1 will be higher this year.
- The abundance of exciting activities and inviting resources capture the children's attention and many

sustain interest for long periods. Adults are skilled in intervening in children's play to promote their understanding of mathematics, the world in which they live and to promote their confidence in being creative. Enticing materials to promote children's writing and reading are readily available in lots of activity areas and used well by the children. Phonics is taught well.

- During the inspection, as children played in the water, good teaching promoted their understanding of capacity and ensured that they learned the correct mathematical vocabulary to describe what they found. The most-able children were challenged effectively and concentrated hard to put numerals together to form a number line to 20, discussing which numbers went before and after others. Lunchtime is a well structured social occasion where the children learn good manners and how to use cutlery correctly.
- The decision to deploy sports coaches to work in the early years for a substantial part of the week is having a significant effect on improving children's coordination and enhancing their learning in other areas, including literacy and mathematics.
- This additional teaching is of a high standard and the children's delight in learning was plain as they set off with their clipboards and the cardboard binoculars they had made to hunt for arctic animals hidden outdoors. The coach helped the children to understand the importance of good listening and good looking and how to move around the area safely. The children could identify many animals correctly and spoke excitedly about the visit from a real reindeer.
- The school is in the process of appointing a new early years leader. Currently, senior leaders are overseeing the leadership and management of this phase. The existing practices, procedures and provision reflect that early years leadership has been good. For example, there are very good links with parents, including home visits, to understand children's needs before they begin school. Similarly, a particularly effective partnership with one of the two main feeder nursery provisions has been established, enabling more accurate assessment of children's attainment on entry and sharing of good early years practice, including the teaching of early reading skills.

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	139053
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	447840

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Melton
Principal	Julie Burnside
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
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