

Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School

Westleigh Lane, Leigh, Lancashire, WN7 5NJ

Inspection dates 28–29 April 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	Good	2
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.

- This is a happy, successful and improving school.
- Determined and skilled leadership by the associate headteacher, executive headteacher and governors has led to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Staff feel valued and appreciated. They respond very effectively to the guidance they receive. As a result, teaching is at least good and improving.
- The school delivers a good range of subjects and learning experiences that pupils enjoy. These promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have a good understanding of British values. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain by the time they leave Year 6.
- Strong relationships exist with parents, external agencies and partners.
- Governors provide rigorous challenge and support. They are passionate about their role and fully committed to continuous improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils are proud of their school and feel safe. Their eagerness to learn is reflected in their good punctuality and broadly average and improving attendance.
- Pupils have highly positive and trusting relationships with staff. These boost pupils' self-esteem and willingness to try their best.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. As a result, standards across the school are rising.
- Provision in the early years is good. Children achieve well and sometimes outstandingly so from their different starting points.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' rate of progress in writing is not always rapid enough to make up sufficiently for any previous underachievement.
- A few teachers do not always provide tasks that stretch pupils' abilities and meet their learning needs. This is particularly so for boys and the most able.
- Teachers' marking is not always used to help pupils improve their work.
- It is not always crystal clear how the effectiveness of actions planned by leaders to improve teaching and achievement will be evaluated.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors closely observed the learning of pupils in all classes across school, including four lessons observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked closely at pupils' work in lessons, in a wide range of books and on display around school. They also spoke often to pupils during the inspection and met with groups of pupils to discuss their views of school. Inspectors listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors made careful checks on records of the progress of pupils, their behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, associate headteacher and middle leaders. Inspectors met with governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, and representatives of the academy trust. They held telephone conversations with a representative of the local authority and the independent School Improvement Partner working with the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school's own view of its performance, plans for improvement and policies and procedures.
- Inspectors also checked closely on the work of governors and a range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through checking the 22 responses to the online Parent View survey and the 34 responses to the school's own recent survey of parental opinion. Inspectors also spoke to parents during the inspection.
- The inspectors took account of the views of staff expressed in the 15 responses to the voluntary inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kirsty Haw

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Leigh Westleigh Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 September 2013. When its predecessor school, Leigh Westleigh Methodist Primary School was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the Acorn Trust. An executive headteacher leads both schools in the academy. The other school is Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School. Each school has its own associate headteacher.
- There have been significant changes in staffing in the last two years, including the appointment of a new assistant headteacher.
- Westleigh Children's Centre is attached to the school. This is part of the Leigh, Lowton and Golborne children's centre group. The executive headteacher co-leads this group. The school shares its Nursery with a private provider, Honey Bears Day Care. These settings are subject to separate inspection arrangements. Reports for these settings may be viewed at www.gov.uk/ofsted.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic communities is much lower than average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is well above average. This additional government funding is provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has a full-time Reception class and a part-time Nursery. Parents are able to purchase additional time in Nursery from Honey Bears Day Care.
- There is a larger proportion of boys than girls in many classes.
- In 2014, the school did not meet the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school works in close partnership with the Leigh, Lowton and Golborne Schools' Partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and accelerate pupils' progress in order to raise attainment, particularly in writing, by ensuring that teachers:
 - plan work consistently that challenges the abilities of all pupils, particularly boys and the most able
 - ensure that marking consistently helps pupils to improve their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that actions planned by leaders at all levels to improve the quality of teaching and achievement are always clear and precise in how their impact will be measured.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The associate headteacher and the executive headteacher form a strong and effective partnership. Their close working relationship and shared passionate determination to make the school the best it can be have led to an unrelenting drive for improvement. They have not been reluctant to take tough decisions when necessary. As a result, past weaknesses in teaching and the progress of pupils have been successfully addressed. The quality of teaching and achievement of pupils are improving strongly.
- Staff, including those new to school, share fully the drive for continuous improvement and morale is high. Staff feel valued and supported. A typical staff comment was, 'This is a nurturing environment with a clear focus on continuous improvement.'
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and what needs to improve further. They have used this knowledge to successfully improve the quality of teaching and achievement. Their plans for further improvement in these areas are detailed and contain the right priorities. However, it is not always clear how the impact of these actions will be assessed, hindering their effectiveness.
- Senior leaders meet regularly with teachers to check that all pupils are making the progress they should. Pupils who need to catch up are given the support they require. Senior leaders have used the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils well. Additional staff, including a pastoral manager, provide skilled support, resulting in disadvantaged pupils progressing as well and sometimes better than others in the school.
- Middle leaders, including those new to the role, share senior leaders' drive for continuous improvement and are eager to strengthen their work. However, it is not always apparent how the effectiveness of their actions to improve teaching and learning will be measured. This is hindering the impact of their work.
- The promotion of equal opportunities is good. All pupils are offered effective support and equal access to a rich and stimulating curriculum. Leaders are fully committed to helping all pupils reach their potential.
- The quality of teaching has been strengthened due to an uncompromising determination from senior leaders to accept nothing less than at least good teaching. Improvements in training and regular checks have led to improved practice. There are good opportunities for staff to observe and share their practice in school and in other schools.
- Subjects are linked together to create highly enjoyable and creative learning opportunities. These are enriched with visits, visitors and residentials. Pupils have good opportunities to learn French, and attend lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 have the opportunity to learn to swim.
- There is great emphasis on tackling discrimination of any kind through strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to celebrate and appreciate differences in culture and traditions, fostering good relationships. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 5 enjoyed a highly informative visit to a Mosque. Staff promote British values well, including tolerance and respect for the rule of law. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- There is good use of the additional funding for physical education and sport. Staff confidence and competence are improving through better training and support. The employment of specialist coaches has led to increased opportunities for pupils to develop skills and in greater participation in additional clubs and competitive sports. There is clear evidence that pupils' well-being and healthy lifestyles are improving.
- Very positive links exist with parents. Although there were a few negative responses on Parent View, discussions with many parents during the inspection and the school's own surveys found no evidence to explain these. Parents say they feel welcomed and well supported. A typical parental comment was, 'The school rewards academic and other success. I trust them to do what's best for my child.'
- The close links the school has with schools in the Leigh, Lowton and Golborne Partnership has led to joint working on improving assessment. This is already having a positive impact on checking how well pupils are learning.
- The school has a strong working relationship with the local authority. The school has received good support in improving teaching and learning, and staff employment. In addition, the school has bought in the services of an independent school improvement partner. This has led to improvements in leadership and to the rigour of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and achievement.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet requirements. Clear policies and procedures are in place. Regular checks by senior leaders and governors ensure these are effective.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors are well led and offer rigorous challenge and support to school leaders. They work closely with the directors of Acorn Trust to ensure they hold senior leaders to account. They visit regularly, know the school well and have a good range of experience and expertise.

Governors have provided strong support that has enabled senior leaders to eradicate inadequate teaching, strengthen the quality of teaching over time and improve the progress of pupils. Governors regularly check on the progress of all groups of pupils. They have a good understanding of how data on the progress of pupils compare to others in the local authority and nationally. They use this information to ensure pupils are learning as well as they should. They ensure teachers' pay progression and pay rewards link closely to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They rigorously tackle any underperformance by teachers so that improvements are made as quickly and effectively as possible.

- Governors check that extra funding for physical education and sport and for disadvantaged pupils is having the positive impact it should. Governors keep a watchful eye on the school's finances. Robust checks are made, particularly by the governor with responsibility for safeguarding, to ensure that practice reflects the safeguarding policy. These checks ensure safeguarding arrangements effectively meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils show pride in their school and a desire to do their best. They are polite and friendly and get on well together. They typically say that 'I like this school because I learn new things and have lots of friends.' Pupils' positive attitudes and eagerness to learn contribute well to their improving progress. Punctuality is good and attendance is broadly average.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They listen carefully to teachers and particularly enjoy working with partners. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are sometimes outstanding. This is when work challenges their thinking and captures their interests. However, when tasks are too easy or too hard, a very few pupils, mainly boys, drift off-task, fidget and chat, hindering the progress they make.
- Pupils are welcoming and respectful to visitors and eagerly told inspectors how much they enjoy learning. Pupils' exceptionally positive and trusting relationships with staff help to boost pupils' confidence, self-esteem and willingness to 'have a go'. They enjoy the wide range of responsibilities on offer, such as being a 'lunchtime mini'. These are older pupils in school who help younger pupils to play happily and safely during their lunch break. Pupils also enjoy being a prefect, member of the school council, an 'eco warrior' or a 'smiley monitor' helping to give out rewards in class. They talk very enthusiastically about the many clubs they attend, such as tag rugby, handball and art. They also enjoy learning French.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to celebrate and appreciate cultural differences and people's rights to hold different beliefs. Pupils typically say, 'Everyone is right with their own beliefs. No matter who we are, where we come from or what we believe in, treat someone how you want to be treated.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils feel safe and can explain how to keep themselves and others safe. They also speak very positively about the way adults look after them. Pupils have a good awareness of the potential dangers posed by strangers or when using the internet. They receive good support through assemblies and work in class. A typical comment from pupils was, 'Never give personal details to people you don't know on the internet.'
- Pupils understand the different forms that bullying can take, such as cyber-bullying and bullying as a result of prejudice. They say that staff deal fairly with the very occasional bullying that takes place.
- Parents are confident their children feel safe. This is reflected in their discussions with inspectors. It is also supported by the positive response to the online Parent View survey and in their response to the school's own recent survey, where 100% of the 35 responses from parents agreed their children feel safe.
- The school has highly robust systems in place to ensure that pupils are safe and that the site is both safe and secure. All the adults who work with pupils are rigorously vetted as being suitable to work with children.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers and teaching assistants ensure they get to know the pupils well as individuals and develop trusting relationships. These help pupils to try their best and work hard. As a result, pupils' eagerness to learn contributes strongly to their improving achievement.

- Teachers stimulate and reinforce learning effectively. This engages pupils' interest and enthusiasm well.
- Pupils are encouraged to talk about their learning, assess how well they are doing and to help each other identify ways of improving their work. This strengthens their ability to cooperate and share ideas.
- Teachers regularly check on how well pupils are learning so tasks can be planned to capture their interests and stretch pupils' abilities. Staff have generally responded well to senior leaders' insistence that expectations of what pupils can and should achieve are raised. However, a few teachers sometimes plan activities that do not meet pupils' learning needs closely enough. As a result, some pupils, particularly boys and the most able do not make the progress they should. This is a particular issue in some lessons in writing.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils generally respond well and show respect for all the adults who work with them.
- There is clear evidence that teachers are generally following the guidance provided by senior leaders on how marking should help pupils to improve their work. Some teachers provide pupils with excellent guidance through marking on how to make their work better and then check that they have done so. However, not all marking consistently reflects the school's marking policy. This hinders the progress of some pupils.
- Pupils learn to read well right from the time they start school. This skilled and systematic teaching of reading helps build the skills and understanding pupils need as they move through school. Pupils receive a good grounding in phonics (the sounds that letters make) so that they can successfully read new words. Highly skilled teaching assistants provide regular additional support to help those who need it.
- Pupils enjoy interesting and stimulating opportunities to write. They have lots of opportunities to talk about and share their ideas. They redraft their work to demonstrate improvements.
- Pupils' mathematical abilities strengthen through regular revision and consolidation of basic skills. They also apply their skills regularly to stimulating, practical problem-solving activities. Pupils can explain why they have chosen particular strategies. This is helping pupils to improve their mastery of mathematical concepts.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The decisive actions and unrelenting drive by senior leaders have successfully addressed the weaker progress seen in the past. As a result, all pupils currently in school, including children in the early years, are making at least good progress. Standards overall are rising, particularly in reading in Year 6.
- Inspection evidence and the school's own data show that many pupils last year made good, and sometimes outstanding, progress from their starting points. This includes the significant numbers of pupils in Year 2 and particularly in Year 6 who have special educational needs. However, this was not consistent across all classes and groups of pupils. Although there is still a little variability, the progress of current pupils in all classes is rapidly improving and at a faster rate than for the whole of last year. This is why attainment across the school is rising.
- All groups of pupils are making at least good progress from their different starting points. The proportion of pupils exceeding the progress expected of them is increasing rapidly. This is so for current Year 2 pupils and particularly for pupils in Year 6. Much larger proportions of pupils are now working at the higher levels in writing, mathematics and, particularly, in reading.
- Successful improvements in the teaching of writing have led to more opportunities for pupils to talk about their ideas with partners and in groups. Pupils often redraft their work to improve punctuation, grammar and choice of vocabulary. As a result, progress in writing is good.
- Achievement in reading is improving due to highly skilled systematic teaching of skills throughout school. Additional skilled support is given to those in danger of falling behind. In 2014, although the results in the Year 1 national screening check on reading were below the national average, they improved on 2013. All pupils taking the Year 2 checks reached expected standards. This reflected pupils' increasing confidence in identifying the sounds that letters make. Pupils continue to make good progress and develop a love of reading as they move through school.
- Pupils demonstrate increasingly secure basic skills and enjoyment in mathematics. Their mastery of mathematical concepts is improving. This is because of improved opportunities for pupils to explain how they are applying their skills in solving practical problems.
- The most able pupils are usually given more demanding work that deepens their understanding and stretches their thinking and abilities. As a result, the progress of the most able pupils is good overall and improving. However, this approach to supporting and challenging the most able is not consistent across school, especially for boys and in writing.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive well-targeted additional support from highly skilled and caring teaching assistants. This support meets effectively their individual needs and ensures these pupils make good and, sometimes, outstanding progress. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress due to the skilled support they receive.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 was a term ahead of other pupils in the school in reading, two terms behind in writing and half a term ahead in mathematics. Compared to other pupils nationally, pupils were four-and-a-half terms behind in reading, five terms behind in writing and four terms behind in mathematics. The progress of disadvantaged pupils was broadly in line with other pupils nationally in reading, but slower in writing and mathematics. However, inspection evidence shows that the gaps in attainment between current disadvantaged pupils and others in school are narrowing rapidly. They are now achieving as well as, and sometimes better than, others in class.

The early years provision

is good

- When children start in the Nursery class, only a quarter of them have the skills typical for their age. Particular weaknesses are evident in children's language, communication and mathematical skills. However, all children, including the most able and those with special educational needs make at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress from their starting points.
- In 2014, children's attainment by the end of the Reception year rose sharply. Although the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was below the national average, children made good progress from their individual starting points, particularly in communication and language, personal development and literacy. An even larger proportion of children in the Reception classes this year are currently on track to reach a good level of development in 2015, in line with the national average for 2014. This is ensuring children are increasingly well prepared for Year 1.
- Children settle quickly due to caring staff, a nurturing environment, well-established routines and strong links with parents and pre-school settings. Staff know the children very well as individuals. Parents play an active role in their children's education. These include parents being able to access assessments about their children's progress online and contributing evidence about their children's achievements electronically.
- Consistently good teaching ensures children experience well-planned and purposeful learning opportunities. Staff closely monitor children's progress. They use this information to plan activities which capture the interests of children and match these closely to their abilities. Staff identify those children needing extra help and provide highly effective support.
- Children's work shows a wide range of stimulating and purposeful learning. Children enjoy a good mixture of learning opportunities led by adults or chosen by themselves. Areas are organised so that children can access resources independently. The outdoor area is used effectively to arouse curiosity and stimulate learning. Children enthusiastically follow their interests in exciting areas such as the mud kitchen, bug hotel and the camouflaged den. Adults play alongside children to enhance their learning.
- Children are eager to learn and behave well. They enthusiastically talk about what they are doing and listen carefully to adults. Children respond well to adult instructions, particularly when taking responsibility for organising resources and equipment or tidying up. They know well how to stay safe.
- The development of children's reading and writing skills is well promoted. Children write their names, label pictures and write sentences, such as when learning about different creatures.
- Skilled teaching of the sounds individual and combinations of letters make helps children to make good progress in their reading. They learn to identify words containing these sounds and accurately identify these in sentences they read or write.
- Children's mathematical skills are promoted well. Staff eagerly reinforce number work and children's ability to recognise different shapes or work out simple number problems.
- Children have good opportunities to explore their learning during a wide range of visits. This stimulates their interest and curiosity in their local area.
- The quality of leadership and management in the early years is good. The leader has an accurate understanding of the setting and what needs to be done next to make further improvements. Children's achievement is good and still improving, and staff are fully supportive of the vision for continuous improvement.
- Children are kept safe through robust risk assessments. Regular checks by the governor with overall responsibility for safeguarding keep safeguarding policies and practice under rigorous review. The pastoral manager assists with this process and together they ensure that safeguarding effectively meets requirements.

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	140087
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	461578

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	Acorn Trust
Chair of the Governing Body	Graham White
Executive Headteacher	Julie-Ann Hewitt
Associate Headteacher	Catherine Whalley
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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