

St Mark's CofE Primary School

Alexandra Street, Newtown, Wigan, Lancashire, WN5 9DS

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Inadequate	4
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires special measures.

- Leaders' and governors' actions to ensure at least a good education for pupils have been ineffective. The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has declined since the previous inspection.
- Not enough has been done by leaders at all levels, including those responsible for English and mathematics, to check the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' learning. Leaders have not held teachers to account for their performance or pupils' progress.
- Information on pupils' performance is not regularly collected and the data which are available are inaccurate.
- Pupils' achievement is inadequate and their attainment is too low, given their abilities.
- Arrangements for supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are inadequate. As a result their achievement is inadequate. Disadvantaged pupils also underachieve because leaders do not ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement are not high enough. Too often tasks and activities set do not match the skills of all pupils and this slows learning.
- Marking of pupils' work is imprecise and rarely identifies how pupils can improve their learning.
- Pupils' writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are poorly developed and they have too few opportunities to practise their reading skills across the curriculum. Pupils are not able to apply their mathematical understanding to problem-solving activities well enough.
- A small minority of pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour and become frustrated, especially when the work set for them is too hard or not difficult enough.
- Provision in the early years is inadequate. Systems for monitoring children's progress are inaccurate and too few children acquire the skills necessary for their learning in Key Stage 1.

The school has the following strengths

- Most pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance has improved since the previous inspection, and is now broadly average.
- Pupils are looked after well by caring staff.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching for small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. One lesson was observed jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors considered 14 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the school's own surveys of parents' views administered at the time of the inspection. Additional evidence was gathered on parents' views from a number of sources, including through discussions.
- Responses to a questionnaire completed by 13 members of staff were considered.
- A number of meetings took place with the National Leader of Education who supports the school. A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority. Meetings were also held with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, school leaders, and staff responsible for English, mathematics, the provision for pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs and children in the early years.
- The breakfast club was inspected and informal discussions were held with pupils who attend the club.
- A range of documents was examined. These included development plans, information about pupils' progress, various records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well-above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by the pupil premium funding, is twice the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A small, but increasing minority is from minority ethnic groups and few speak English as an additional language.
- Children in the early years provision attend a Reception class on a full-time basis.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher is absent. The deputy headteacher is currently responsible for running the school and is being supported for two days per week by a National Leader of Education from Tyldesley Primary School.
- Support is also provided for the early years provision by an experienced early years practitioner and the headteacher of an outstanding school to help improve the quality of teaching.
- The governing body has been reconstituted. Governors are receiving support from a National Leader of Governance from Tyldesley Primary School.
- A breakfast club operates from the site; this is managed by the school's governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good, and in so doing improve the progress of all groups of pupils across the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers and teaching assistants have the highest possible expectations of the progress pupils are capable of making and of their behaviour
 - making sure that tasks and activities in lessons match the skills and abilities of all pupils so that they are less likely to become frustrated
 - ensuring that marking is precise and identifies how pupils can improve their learning
 - making sure that pupils' writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling skills are developed consistently across all subjects
 - ensuring that pupils are provided with as many opportunities as possible to practise their reading skills
 - checking frequently in mathematics lessons that pupils can apply their mathematical understanding to problem-solving activities.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by:
 - making sure that governors use their skills to challenge school leaders effectively, and hold senior leaders to account for raising standards
 - ensuring that senior leaders provide regular training for staff
 - putting into place clear plans for improving the quality of teaching
 - monitoring the curriculum in order to ensure that it is fully effective
 - holding teachers fully to account for the performance of pupils
 - ensuring that data on pupils' performance are accurate and used effectively by all staff to monitor the performance of pupils closely
 - improving provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs through enhancing

leadership, the quality of teaching and arrangements for supporting these pupils

- ensuring that middle leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics, have a fuller role in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

■ Improve pupils' behaviour and safety by:

- making learning more interesting so pupils are more enthused in lessons
- communicating clear expectations to pupils about how they should behave in class
- fostering better relationships with parents in order to improve pupils' attendance further
- making sure that any bullying is dealt with swiftly and effectively and to parents' satisfaction
- making certain that any racist incidents are properly recorded.

■ Improve children's achievement in the early years so that they are better equipped with the skills necessary for their learning in Year 1 by:

- making sure that teaching is always at least good
- ensuring that the leader monitors the performance of children accurately, assesses how they are developing, and uses the resulting information effectively to plan the next steps in their learning
- ensuring that the leader provides regular training for staff.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are inadequate

- Senior leaders, including governors, have not created a culture of high expectations of pupils, nor have they ensured that teachers are properly supported through regular training, or held fully to account for their performance. In addition to this, senior leaders have not ensured that pupils behave consistently well in class, nor have they put into place clear development plans to move the school forward. As a result of this weak leadership and management, pupils' achievement is inadequate.
- The development of middle leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics, is at an early stage. Although middle leaders have done some work to improve pupils' writing skills and review the teaching of mathematics, it has yet to have an impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- School systems for monitoring the performance of teachers have only recently been introduced. Over time they have not been demanding enough and teachers have not been fully accountable for pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have an inflated view of the quality of teaching because they have not monitored the effectiveness of teaching on learning closely enough. For some time leaders have presented information to governors which has indicated that teaching is good and outstanding. However, outcomes for pupils across the school have been significantly below average for several years and do not support this view.
- Senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for the early years, the performance of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, do not have reliable data on pupils' performance. Therefore they are not able to monitor the performance of pupils, or plan appropriate teaching activities matched to the learning needs of the pupils.
- The pupil premium funding is not managed effectively by senior leaders. Disadvantaged pupils made inadequate progress in reading, writing and mathematics in 2014 and their attainment was well below that of other pupils nationally. Improvements so far this year are not rapid enough to narrow the gap.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum has yet to be fully evaluated by the leadership. Inspectors found, however, that some pupils do not find their learning either interesting or engaging. Sometimes opportunities are missed to bring pupils' learning to life.
- The school's work to promote pupils' reading and mathematics skills across the curriculum is inadequate. Pupils' work in their extended writing and problem-solving books is new and yet to impact on the development of their skills in these areas.
- The school works appropriately to challenge discrimination and to foster good relationships among pupils and staff in the school. This includes providing suitably for most areas of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils regularly engage in collective worship and celebrate various religious and cultural festivals, including the Harvest Festival, and recently participated in a 'Remembrance walk' and a Korean worship assembly.
- Pupils learn about British values through the school's focus on democracy, individual liberty and mutual respect. They are familiar with the values of friendship, forgiveness and humility. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the culturally diverse nature of British society is not as well-developed.
- The school's relationship with parents is not as strong as it could be. A significant proportion of the small number of parents who completed Parent View raised concerns in a number of areas, including about the behaviour of pupils. The questionnaire administered by the school during the inspection, returned by 42 parents, was more positive, as were discussions with parents. However, there remains a significant minority of parents who are not satisfied with the school.
- Senior leaders and governors do ensure that the primary school physical education and sport funding is spent well. It contributes effectively to increasing pupils' participation in sporting activities and supports the development of the skills of the physical education coordinator.
- The school's work to promote equality of opportunity is inadequate, especially for those pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium and those with disabilities or special educational needs. These pupils have experienced poor quality teaching and leadership, and ineffective help with their learning over a long period of time.
- The local authority's actions to move the school forward are very recent. It has brokered the support of a National Leader of Education, who works closely with the deputy headteacher, and a National Leader of Governance. However, while these arrangements are making some difference, they have not been in place long enough to impact significantly on improving the school.
- The school takes care to ensure that it has effective arrangements for safeguarding its pupils, including children in the early years. All staff are familiar with safeguarding procedures and know exactly what to do if they have any concerns about pupils' safety or well-being. This helps to ensure that all statutory

requirements for safeguarding are met.

- The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors have not held leaders well enough to account for the achievement of pupils, and children in the early years, or the performance of teachers. This is because they have been too reliant on the information presented to them by senior leaders. Although governors have questioned the accuracy of such information, on the quality of teaching, for example, standards have been allowed to decline for too long.
- The governing body has recently been reconstituted, and governors now have clearly defined areas of responsibility. They are currently being supported by a National Leader of Governance and are improving their understanding of school performance data, and of the importance of monitoring pupils' progress.
- Until recently there was no system in place to check on teachers' performance, or reward them for their work. No pay awards have been granted, nor have there been any promotions.
- Governors have made it a priority to work closely with senior leaders, and the National Leader of Education supporting the school, to ensure that effective systems are in place to help the school to improve. They are aware that teaching activities aiming to improve standards for pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding are inadequate. They are determined to bring their skills and experience to their various roles and hold senior leaders more fully to account.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Pupils usually behave well in class, but at times find it difficult to manage their own behaviour, particularly when activities are not stimulating, or are too hard or not difficult enough. This is reflected in the incidents of poor behaviour recorded in class behaviour logs. Older pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is usually good; however, they say that some pupils get angry in class when they can't do something and sometimes have to go outside to calm down.
- Pupils' attendance has improved this year, and is broadly average. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and learning with their friends and are looked after well by caring staff. They are punctual, and enjoy participating in breakfast -club activities.
- Pupils understand some forms of discrimination, such as racism which they say is 'when someone with a different skin colour or religion is bullied'. They indicate that this can happen in school, but that it is rare. However, the school does not keep a central record of such incidents, which is a legal requirement.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as eco and school councillors. They are welcoming to visitors, polite and enjoy talking about their work. Pupils move around corridors sensibly and are orderly during lunch and break times. The pupils enjoy coming together for collective worship where they behave well, listen intently, and regularly volunteer to answer questions.
- Pupils enjoy attending the breakfast club where they engage happily in games and play activities. Their participation has helped to improve both their punctuality and attendance.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement because some class logs reveal that a small number of pupils behave inappropriately. Some parents expressed concerns about bullying and are of the opinion that poor behaviour is not always dealt with effectively enough. Inspection evidence shows that while a small minority of pupils does not always behave well, most adults manage behaviour skilfully and ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure. Occasionally teachers do not make their expectations of behaviour clear enough.
- Older pupils know that they should not share information with people they don't know over the internet. They know that people can be bullied though 'nasty texts' but have a less well developed understanding of the dangers associated with cyber-bullying.
- Leaders make sure that the school is secure. Pupils say that they feel safe and are confident that there is always someone to talk to if they have any concerns.
- Pupils understand safe and unsafe situations and know how to avoid dangers and risks. All pupils, as well as children in the early years, learn about road safety. Older pupils learn how to stay safe while riding

their bikes.

- Various visitors, including those from the fire and community police services, regularly take assemblies to inform pupils about potential dangers during Bonfire Night, and of 'stranger danger'.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Teaching over time is inadequate and has not ensured that pupils make sufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not have high enough expectations of pupils and do not always plan activities that they find engaging, or which enable them to reach the levels of which they are capable. Too often tasks and activities in class do not match the skills of pupils, including those of the most and least able.
- Pupils are often over-reliant on adults or are required to complete worksheets which they find uninteresting. As a result of this they sometimes lose interest, find it difficult to maintain their concentration, shout out, or become distracted.
- Teachers do not ensure that pupils have opportunities to practise and refine their writing skills across the curriculum, and opportunities are missed for them to engage in activities which require them to write at length.
- The teaching of mathematics is inadequate. Pupils have large gaps in their mathematical understanding and ability to apply what skills they have to problem-solving activities. Teachers are often 'fire-fighting' in an attempt to make up for lost learning. This was evident when mathematics was being taught and the teacher was trying to tackle number bonds, different types of angles and range, mode, and median while moving between different groups of pupils, some with exceptionally poor skills.
- The teaching of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs has not been good enough to ensure that they make good progress and attain well. This is because, until recently, pupils were routinely taken out of class for large periods of time to participate in various activities which were not evaluated. This practice has recently changed. Discussions with pupils from these groups reveal that they are happy to be learning alongside their peers, and that this is helping them to make better progress.
- The way teaching assistants are deployed varies from class to class. Their job is sometimes made more difficult because teachers do not always set work at an appropriate level for the pupils.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) are not taught consistently across the school. Pupils who read for inspectors said that they enjoyed reading; however, those in Years 2, 3, 5 and 6 could name few authors, and younger pupils found it difficult to explain the difference between factual and fiction books. This is because the teaching of reading places little emphasis on developing these skills.
- Teachers' marking and feedback does not do enough to identify what pupils need to do to improve their work. As a result of this, very few pupils know what they need to do to improve their work in English or mathematics. Senior leaders have recently taken action on this, and some teachers' marking is improving. However, it is too early to see the impact of this improvement on pupils' achievement.
- Some teachers are beginning to set different and more challenging activities for pupils. As a result, these pupils are becoming more confident in their own abilities, more able to manage their own behaviour, and less reliant on asking their teachers for help before trying things out for themselves.
- Pupils are becoming more focused and teaching is just starting to have a greater sense of urgency. This was demonstrated in a mathematics class in lower Key Stage 2, where, after only four weeks, pupils were familiar with their new routine of 'reading and responding' to their teachers' marking. All pupils were able to read their teacher's different instructions, as they worked studiously to correct and improve their calculations.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- Pupils' achievement, including in the early years, is inadequate. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing, mathematics, grammar, punctuation and spelling was significantly below average at the end of Year 6 in 2014, as it has been for the last three years. Their progress in all subjects was too slow. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were also significantly below average in all subjects, as they have been for the last five years.
- There are some early signs of improvement so far this year, as shown by the work in pupils' books, particularly in Years 5, 6 and 2. However, too many pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are still making little, or no, progress.

- The proportion of pupils who were identified as secure in their phonic skills by the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2014 was broadly average. Although guided reading sessions have been introduced across the school to 'boost' pupils' reading skills, it is too soon to see evidence of good progress in reading. There is still a lot of ground for pupils to make up, and the teaching of phonics is not yet consistently good.
- There are some signs of improvement in pupils' progress in writing, but overall it is inadequate because pupils do not practise their writing skills, or sufficiently develop their grammar, punctuation and spelling when working in range of subjects; there are also too few opportunities for pupils to write at length.
- Although pupils' progress in mathematics in 2014 was better than in other subjects, and there are signs of improvements so far this academic year, pupils' skills are not being developed fast enough to make up for the gaps in their learning from previous years.
- The number of pupils on roll with English as an additional language is growing. However, support provided to help them acquire English and fully participate in learning with their peers is inadequate. The school does not have any tracking information on the progress of these pupils or those from minority ethnic groups. In 2014 the achievement of these pupils, due to the lack of support they received, was below average by the time they left school at the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs made inadequate progress in all year groups in 2014, and too many continue to do so. The practice of withdrawing large numbers of pupils from working alongside their peers for long periods of time has never been systematically monitored, nor has its impact been assessed. However discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work reveal an over-reliance on worksheets, and an uninteresting curriculum.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was lower than that of other pupils in school by approximately a term in mathematics and well over a year lower in reading and writing. They were four terms behind the non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in mathematics, and approximately two years behind in reading and writing. In 2014, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was much slower than that of all pupils nationally and their achievement was inadequate.
- Over time the achievement of the most able pupils is inadequate. These pupils' progress is just starting to improve because teachers are beginning to set harder work, and extra homework. However, these developments are very recent.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- The leadership and management of the early years provision are inadequate. The wide variations in the quality of teaching in the early years have not been addressed. Teaching over time is inadequate and has not been good enough to ensure that children make good progress and attain well. In addition to this, data and assessment information on how well children are developing are unreliable.
- Leaders have only recently started to gather and analyse information on precisely what children can do and what they know. However, available evidence indicates that most children start Reception with weak skills that are below those expected in most areas of learning, including speaking, listening and reading. Over time Reception staff have not assessed children's stages of development accurately in order to be able to identify and address gaps in their learning. As a result, too few children develop the breadth of knowledge and level of skills necessary to make a successful transition to Year 1.
- Planning for children's learning has been hampered by a lack of reliable information on children's skills and knowledge. Until very recently staff did not regularly plan activities which engaged children, or challenged them in their learning.
- Children behave well. They follow instructions carefully and move around their classroom and outdoor learning and playing areas sensibly and considerately. Staff ensure that they are kept safe.
- Recent support from an experienced early years practitioner is beginning to have an impact on early years provision, including the quality of teaching, and children's development. For example, phonics teaching is improving.
- Children are increasingly enjoying the activities that are planned for them. This was evident in the medical role-play area where children used stethoscopes to check each other's heartbeat and carefully examined chest x-rays using a light box. This theme was explored further in the outdoor learning areas where children could make their own articulated skeletons and write up their notes.
- Children play safely together and behave well. They take turns when using equipment, enjoy sharing their ideas and talking about their learning, listen to adults and regularly visit the 'reflective area' where they read quietly.
- Work to keep parents informed is developing through coffee mornings and meetings to discuss how well

children are performing. Home visits are made before children are admitted into Reception. Parents who spoke to inspectors were happy that their children are safe and well looked after.

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	106452
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	456161

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	190
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Hilton
Headteacher	Glen Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2012
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