

Lytham Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School

Park View Road, Lytham St Annes, Lancashire, FY8 4HA

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The deputy headteacher has led the school well through a period of instability. She has been well supported by governors and other school leaders.
- Together they have ensured that the good quality of teaching, and consequently good achievement, has been maintained. Teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils' achievement is good and by the time they leave the school they have reached above-average standards from an average starting point.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils make as good progress as their classmates.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They benefit from a well-planned and stimulating learning environment.
- Pupils are proud of their school, which is reflected in their good behaviour and how well pupils of all ages mix and play happily together.
- The governors are knowledgeable and well informed. Several governors are new but have been effectively inducted in order to provide a good balance of support and challenge.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The curriculum helps pupils learn about British values and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe. Strong relationships with adults make sure all pupils are well cared for. Levels of attendance are the same as most schools.
- Parents and pupils views are very positive about the school and what it provides them with.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding because in lessons not all teachers move pupils on to more challenging tasks quickly enough. Hence, progress is not rapid enough.
- Although provision for the most able has improved, tasks are still not always challenging enough for them in some classes.
- Teachers' marking does not fully impact on improving pupils' learning.
- Best use is not always made of teaching assistants' time.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors looked at learning in lessons, or parts of lessons, and carried out general observations across different parts of the school. The deputy headteacher accompanied the lead inspector for some observations. The inspectors talked to pupils about their work and listened to a number of pupils read.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including systems for checking pupils' progress, records relating to attendance and behaviour, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is doing and how it plans to improve. Records on checks on the quality of teaching and the minutes of the governing body meetings were examined.
- The inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work across the school in a range of subjects, especially in numeracy and literacy books.
- Several meetings were held, including with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Questionnaires from 21 members of staff were scrutinised. The inspectors also took account of the 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and had informal discussions with parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Gordon Alston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Deane

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few speak English as an additional language.
- Most pupils are taught in single-age classes but there are two classes which have pupils from two different year groups.
- The school makes provision for reception-aged children in the early years. Children attend on a full-time basis.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, eligible for support through the pupil premium, is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been changes to the school's leadership team since the last inspection and the school is currently led by the deputy headteacher. A new headteacher has been appointed to take up post from September 2015.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding in order to accelerate pupils' progress, including the most able pupils, by:
 - ensuring teachers check on pupils' learning as they work and move them on as soon as possible to more challenging tasks
 - ensuring all teachers apply the best practice seen in marking and give pupils the opportunity to respond in order to improve their work
 - ensure teachers provide teaching assistants with sufficient guidance of what they want them to do in lessons, in order to make their role in supporting and extending pupils' learning more effective.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The deputy headteacher knows the school well. She has used her knowledge well in maintaining the good quality of teaching and learning across the school during a period of instability. She has received good support from governors, senior leaders and the local authority.
- Overall, the recommendations from the previous report have been tackled successfully resulting in consistently good teaching across the school with pupils making good progress over time. Although school leaders have tried to ensure the most able pupils make sustained and rapid progress, this is still not consistent in all classes.
- A greater rigour in checking the progress pupils make and setting challenging targets has raised the expectations of teachers and pupils. Pupils whose rate of progress slows down are quickly identified and support is given to make sure they do not fall behind.
- This rigour also extends to regular checks on the quality of teaching. Lesson observations by senior leaders are used well to judge the effectiveness of teaching in helping pupils learn. Feedback is given and pointers for improvement are set for individual teachers. This has helped improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
- Middle leaders are developing well and fulfil their roles effectively. They check on how well pupils are doing in their subjects, or across a key stage, supporting teachers to improve their practice. A cycle of classroom observations has been established to further develop middle leaders' knowledge.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority and is effective. Governors check to ensure all statutory requirements are met. They support and challenge leaders to check that training is up to date. All staff have received training and are aware of how to keep pupils safe.
- There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities, which is successfully promoted through the inclusive ethos of the school. It is evident through the thorough way pupils' progress is checked to make sure all pupils achieve well. Vulnerable groups are identified and a special focus is kept on them to make sure all pupils make good progress, including the most able.
- The school is a very caring school. It tackles discrimination and fosters good relationships well. Pupils have a strong voice in school and their ideas are listened to and acted upon. They have raised funds themselves and instigated improvements in the playground, and the older pupils have clear roles in supervising and helping other pupils. Pupils realise adults listen to their views and take them seriously, which in turn leads to mutual respect and helps the school run smoothly.
- The curriculum provides a good range of interesting topics and helps promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are a good number of trips and visitors, which provide extra excitement and motivation for pupils. The wide range of clubs also enriches and extends the subjects taught. Leaders have ensured a strong focus on British values permeates teaching and learning. Pupils' understanding of democracy in action can be seen through the school council's endeavours. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The extra funds the school receives to help disadvantaged pupils is used well. It provides both academic support through small-group and one-to-one learning sessions, as well as personal and emotional support through the help of the learning mentor.
- Extra sports funding has also been used effectively. This has provided extra clubs with qualified and expert staff and support for teachers in teaching gymnastics. The numbers of pupils taking part in sports has increased and the school now takes part in a number of inter-school competitions.
- The local authority has been very helpful and supported the deputy headteacher well in the period of instability. Visits have been frequent and have helped maintain the good quality of education the school provides. Good use is made of training opportunities provided by the local authority. For example, middle leaders have received training that has improved their skills in leading a key stage.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governance of the school is effective and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. Governors are kept well informed through reports and presentations from leaders at all levels. They visit school regularly and talk to pupils and staff and have a clear picture of the quality of teaching. They know that procedures are in place to further improve the quality of teaching. They use their expertise well to hold the school to account. This includes finance and safeguarding. They are clear about what effect the extra money the school receives for sports and disadvantaged pupils is having. Through their scrutiny of the school's performance data they know where the priorities for improvement are. They are diligent in inducting new governors. They attend training sessions in order to develop their governance skills further. This has helped them become

aware of the changes in the new curriculum and in assessment procedures. Governors set challenging targets for the headteacher and understand the link between teachers' pay and their performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and contribute well to the progress they make. When approached pupils are keen to talk about their targets or show off a good piece of work. The school has established a clear code of conduct based on respect for all, which pupils follow conscientiously.
- Pupils are courteous, friendly and cooperate well with one another and adults. They look after one another, are keen to take on responsibility and they act maturely. The Year 6 pupils act as buddies for Reception children. They recently helped them to plant a variety of donated plants. This contributed to the school's efforts in a local 'Best Kept School Garden' competition.
- Behaviour is good around school, during breaks and lunchtimes and when pupils play together. In lessons, pupils concentrate well but they become restless when not fully challenged. Teaching assistants and teachers work well with pupils who have more-complex behaviour needs. This ensures that learning for their class-mates is not interrupted. School records show that very little bullying occurs and pupils confirm this. They say that any such instances are dealt with quickly and fairly by adults. There are no instances of racial or homophobic bullying although the school monitors this carefully. As a result exclusions are rare.
- Surveys confirm that the vast majority of parents also feel behaviour is good. They comment on how well pupils behave even when they are not supervised by teachers.
- The school reinforces its ethos through rewards in class and in assemblies. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on how to treat others. The school invites a range of people to lead assemblies, including pupils, to present a range of Christian and other views and to help reinforce the school's approach to promoting diversity and tackling discrimination.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils, staff and parents are unanimous in their view that the children are safe in school. Accidents do occasionally happen but a number of staff are sufficiently well trained to deal with such incidents. Site security is always treated as a priority.
- The school provides a range of experiences to help pupils behave safely. These include residential trips, planned activities to keep them safe when walking or cycling, and e-safety. Risk assessments are carried out regularly by qualified personnel and findings are documented, and kept, to help with continual improvement. Child protection is a priority and all staff have received up-to-date training. Policies are clear and regularly reviewed as to their effectiveness and necessary changes made.
- Pupils' attendance is at a level similar to most schools. Due to the school's tenacity in tackling poor attendance, the number of pupils who miss a substantial number of days is falling.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school. This is confirmed by the work in pupils' books, by pupils' confidence in reading, writing and mathematics, and in progress data.
- A common strength is the warm, positive learning environment that teachers create in their classrooms. Colourful displays of pupils' work, an atmosphere of learning together, alongside very good relationships contribute to this.
- Teachers explain the purpose of learning well. Pupils evaluate how successfully they have gained the knowledge and understanding intended by the end of the lesson. The time given to this practice is not consistent in all classes.
- Teachers keep pupils on track, they pick up and clarify misunderstandings and make sure that good progress is maintained. However, at times, pupils are not moved on to more-challenging tasks quickly enough, especially the most able pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson, the questions on a worksheet did not increase in difficulty from the beginning to the end but pupils were expected to answer all 10 before moving on to a 'challenge'. This slowed the pace of learning for some pupils.
- Teachers and leaders have worked hard to agree an approach to marking pupils' work. This has improved the helpfulness of teachers' comments and is having a positive impact overall on pupils' learning. However, this impact is variable because not all teachers expect or insist that pupils respond to their

marking comments. Consequently, at times, pupils do not quickly improve their work or learn from their mistakes.

- Phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) are well taught and help pupils decode words they do not recognise. Regular one to one and small group reading sessions further develop pupils' skills in understanding what they read. This has developed a keenness to read and is reflected in the above-average standards in reading that pupils reach by the end of Year 6. Many older pupils read classic novels written for adults such as those by Jane Austin.
- Pupils have lots of opportunities to write. Links across different subjects provide opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they have been taught in English lessons. In Year 1, pupils were writing descriptions of animals they had photographed after a recent visit to Blackpool Zoo.
- However, in Key Stage 1, expectations of pupils' handwriting are not high enough especially when they write in other areas of the curriculum. This sometimes results in incorrectly formed letters and poor presentation.
- Mathematics lessons are well planned to contain an element of consolidation and challenge for pupils of all abilities. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and usually plan activities to stretch them. For example, in a challenging Year 6 lesson, the most able pupils were fully tested as they calculated how many grains of rice there would be on the last square on a chess board if the grains of rice were doubled up on each square till the last square was reached. 'This is really hard - there could be squillions!' was the pupils' response. However, this level of challenge is not always a feature and so at times the work set for the most able is not hard enough to ensure they make the progress they are capable of. Not all teachers move the most able pupils on to more challenging tasks quickly enough to ensure rapid and sustained progress. The school is aware of this and plans are in place to support these teachers.
- The impact teaching assistants have on pupils' learning is variable. Teaching assistants do not always have a clear role, particularly at the start of lessons and so sometimes they are hindered in helping pupils to make good progress. Generally teaching assistants have a good knowledge and understanding of what pupils are trying to achieve. However, at times their knowledge is less secure and so the progress made by the pupils they are supporting is limited.

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school in the Reception class they have skills that are broadly typical for their age. The good start they get in the early years is successfully built on as pupils move through the school. Standards in Year 6 are currently above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. In the Year 1 national phonics tests, pupils' achievement is better than most schools nationally. Last year, at the end of Year 2, results in national tests in reading were below average but data show that this group of pupils still did well from the level of skill they had when they first started school. By the end of Year 6, results in national tests last year were above average. Current pupils are already working at above-average standards in reading.
- Pupils make good progress in writing. Teachers have focused successfully on improving pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation skills. There is a consistent approach to teaching these skills. Results from national tests taken at the end of last year show pupils were below average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. Currently, standards are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6.
- The biggest improvement is in mathematics, due to the school's drive to address previous underachievement. In national tests last year, results at the end of Year 6 were not as good as in reading and writing and were below the national average. The school recognised that this was because some of the most able pupils did not do as well as they should have. Consequently, there has been a stronger focus on teaching mental and oral skills and to improve pupils' ability to apply their skills in problem-solving situations. As a result achievement is now better and standards in Year 6 are above average. More pupils are now working at the higher level in Year 6.
- Overall, the achievement of the most able pupils is good. It is strongest in reading and writing but less so in mathematics. Although it has improved, the initiatives the school has introduced this year have not fully impacted in some classes.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They receive the right level of help and leaders check on their progress frequently. The school makes good use of outside help and expertise to provide pupils who need it with additional support. There are good links with secondary schools to ease the transition of these pupils to the next stage in their education.

- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to aid the personal and academic achievement of eligible pupils. Because of the small numbers involved it is not possible to comment on these pupils' attainment relative to their school and national peers without identifying individual pupils. However, the school's system to tracking pupils' progress shows that these pupils make the same good progress as their peers. Any gaps in their knowledge and understanding and in their performance relative to others are closing.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years provision is well led and managed. Leaders have set realistic targets for children's attainment by the end of the year. Rigorous systems for monitoring how well children are doing and assessing the impact of teaching are in place. This enables staff to focus on developing those areas of learning where children's achievement is weaker, for example in language for communication.
- Parents are very happy with what the early years provides. They feel their children are safe and well cared for and appreciate the many opportunities that they have to support their child's learning. There are opportunities at the start of the school day to share what the children have been doing the previous day and for parents to talk informally to staff.
- Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. Despite limited outdoor space and equipment, learning in the classroom is stimulated well and children get off to a good start in the early years. The adults who they spend their time with are caring and well trained. Children are safe and aware of safety rules, for example, when riding bicycles or sharing large building resources. The high expectations that staff have of children ensure that they behave well and make good progress. The vast majority enter Year 1 fully prepared to take on any challenges presented to them.
- The children are inquisitive and work very well together. They enjoy sharing their resources, playing together and talking about their learning. A group of boys were explaining why they needed a gate on the compound they were making from wooden blocks: so that the lions would have more room to move around. This followed a visit to Blackpool Zoo, which sparked off many learning activities for the children.
- Teaching is good and staff create a good balance between tasks that are led by an adult and those children can choose for themselves. Staff promote children's reading, writing and number skills and place a strong emphasis on communication skills. They positively promote children's understanding of the world around them through exciting and interesting tasks.

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	119551
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	461725

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	R Stubbs
Acting Headteacher	T Dearnley (Deputy Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2012
Telephone number	01253 736900
Fax number	01253 736901
Email address	head@lytham.lancs.sch.uk

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