

# Nelson St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Hibson Road, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 0PY

## Inspection dates

17–18 November 2015

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The senior leaders, under the determined leadership of the headteacher, have succeeded in bringing about clear improvements in the school. They have done this at a time when the school has grown in numbers and moved onto a new site.
- Governance has improved. The governors are now effective in holding the headteacher and staff to account.
- Staff morale is high and relationships between all members of the school community are good.
- The pupils are kept safe and they enjoy coming to school. They behave well in lessons and during social times. They take pride in their own appearance and the school environment.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good. Lessons are carefully planned and organised. Teachers build on pupils' keenness to learn.
- Results across both stages have improved and are now in line with or above national averages.
- The progress that pupils make during their time at the school is above or in line with the averages across the country. Disadvantaged pupils make as much progress as other pupils nationally.
- The leadership of the early years is strong and children make good progress in a stimulating, safe and caring environment.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not leading to consistently outstanding achievement.
- The most-able pupils are not being challenged sufficiently to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- The school environment does not always reflect the diversity of the community represented by its pupils.
- Leaders and governors do not always make the best use of information about pupils' performance to provide sharp success criteria against which to judge their work.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that all pupils, particularly the most-able, are presented with consistently high challenges in all subjects so that they make rapid progress and achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Further develop the school environment to ensure that it reflects the full range of cultures represented within the school's community.
- Improve the quality of school improvement planning and self-evaluation by including sharper success criteria based on a clear and succinct analysis of information about pupils' progress, so that school leaders and governors can judge the success of their work more precisely.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The senior leaders, under the determined leadership of the headteacher, have worked hard to bring about clear improvements in the school. Since the last inspection, results at each key stage have risen, teaching has improved and pupils' progress has increased. During that time, the number of pupils has increased and the school has moved to a new building.
- Despite the challenges and upheaval that all this has entailed, morale is high. Virtually all the responses by staff to Ofsted's staff questionnaire were very positive, as were the comments made to inspectors about the support that the school provides for their professional development. The responses to the online survey for parents were also positive, with one parent, for example, referring to the 'family atmosphere' in the school, a quality that was also identified by the inspectors.
- An important element in raising standards is the system that the school has established for checking regularly on the progress that pupils are making so that extra help can be provided for those who need it. The additional support for those who are having difficulty reading has been particularly successful and has led to rapid improvements. However, the school does not provide sufficient support and challenge to the most-able pupils to enable them to make the additional progress of which they are capable.
- The senior leaders have gathered a wealth of information on pupils' performance. However, they do not always analyse it in a way that gives a clear and succinct picture of trends and patterns across the school. As a result, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans are not as precise as they could be.
- The headteacher has been keen to extend responsibility for leadership across the school and has put considerable emphasis on developing the role of middle leaders. A varied programme has been put in place to extend the skills of longstanding middle leaders and also to support staff who are new to the role. Staff spoke enthusiastically about the development programmes available to them.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Apart from English, mathematics and French, most subjects are taught through themes and topics. The school has conducted a detailed review of what is taught to ensure that it covers all that is required by the National Curriculum. To supplement what is taught in class, the pupils also visit museums and outdoor centres and, in Key Stage 2, have access to a number of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Communications from parents indicated a wish for these opportunities to be extended to Key Stage 1 pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities receive good support. The school also provides a range of opportunities for developing pupils' personal skills and confidence. Considerable additional help is provided for those who need to make greater progress in English and mathematics. However, some pupils are removed from other subjects to receive this, which at times limits their access to a broad range of subjects.
- The governors have allocated pupil premium funding to a range of appropriate activities that have led to clear improvements in the academic and personal development of disadvantaged pupils. However, because of a lack of specific targets in the school's plans, it is difficult to determine whether the improvements made were as great as the governors had intended.
- The school has used its primary school sports funding appropriately to extend the range of games and sporting activities on offer to pupils, while also developing the skills and confidence of members of staff to teach in this area. Through the recently established house system, pupils have increasing opportunities to take part in sports competitions.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has clear and appropriate systems for safeguarding its pupils. It is rigorous in checking on the suitability of adults to work with children. All staff have received the required training and the senior leaders have recently updated the safeguarding policy. There are appropriate policies and systems in place to protect pupils from extremism and radicalisation. The school involves parents and external agencies well to ensure that the school is a safe and supportive environment. Vulnerable pupils benefit from high-quality support.
- Of the 19 responses made to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the great majority were positive. Almost all parents who responded would recommend the school to another parent. A very small proportion of returns expressed concern about how bullying is handled by the school. The inspectors found that bullying incidents were few. When they did happen, they were carefully logged by teachers and senior leaders and dealt with appropriately. The randomly selected pupils interviewed by the inspectors indicated that they had experienced a small amount of bullying but that this had been tackled and stopped. These pupils were very positive about the school.

- Since the school was identified as requiring improvement two years ago, it has received additional help from the headteacher and staff of an outstanding school, through an arrangement made by the local authority. The programme of support was agreed in collaboration with the diocese. The school has made good and judicious use of this and other support but was quickly able to establish its own successful programme for improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
  - The quality of governance has improved considerably since the last inspection. The governing body has been reviewed and re-constituted. Membership has changed and a new committee structure has been established.
  - The headteacher reports regularly to the governors on the progress made by pupils and has to answer searching and pertinent questions, particularly from members of the standards committee.
  - The governors have clear systems for managing the performance of the headteacher and have provided him with good support in tackling previous inadequate teaching in the school.
  - Governors have worked hard to manage budgets so that resources and staffing are made available in the areas where improvement is most needed. This has included ensuring that the additional government pupil premium funding is targeted on the vulnerable pupils for whom it is intended.
  - Together with the senior leaders, the governors have tackled each of the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report.
  - The information on governors on the school website is still not complete, despite an update that occurred during the inspection.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Since the last inspection, the senior leaders have worked hard and successfully to improve the quality of teaching in the school. Teachers have received general training, as well as training and support related to their own personal targets and areas of responsibility. The impact of this training was evident in the lessons observed and the pupils' books examined.
- The teachers plan their lessons diligently, manage them well and use a good range of resources to support pupils' learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together, and between them ensure a seamless transition from one activity to the next which makes sure that no time is wasted.
- Most pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm and are prepared to take an active part in their learning. Occasionally, however, they lose concentration, usually when the work is not sufficiently demanding or towards the end of the day.
- Teachers make good use of questions to prompt pupils to think for themselves and to extend their own ideas. Some, however, rely too heavily on the answers volunteered by the pupils and do not take the opportunity to check the understanding of those pupils who are less forthcoming. Teachers adapt their questions well to the varying levels of understanding of low- and middle-ability pupils. In the case of high-ability pupils, however, the questions are not always sufficiently challenging to prompt them to think deeply and to extend their ideas further.
- At both key stages, there were instances where the most-able had to sit through explanations that were geared to middle- and lower ability pupils before starting on work that was suited to their own levels of understanding. As a result, they were not making the rapid progress of which they were capable.
- The teachers' marking is thorough and the pupils are given a clear indication of what they need to do to improve. The pupils have a clear understanding of what their targets are and on which areas they should be concentrating when doing a particular piece of work.
- In all classes, pupils take pride in their work. Writing is well formed and books are always neat and well presented. Occasionally, the lack of use of rulers means that the work in mathematics is not as accurate as it might be.
- Teachers assess the pupils' work regularly and, through pupil progress meetings, check on how each child is progressing against his or her targets. The information on pupils across the school is collated through a recently developed electronic system that provides teachers and leaders with accurate, good-quality information.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The pupils who spoke to the inspectors said that they enjoyed coming to school. They felt safe in school and when travelling to and from school. They knew how to keep themselves safe on the road and near railway lines and water. They had been involved in regular fire safety practices and knew what they should do and where they should go in the case of a fire. They described the systems that the school had to keep them safe when using the internet. It was less clear whether they all knew how to apply these principles away from the school. They said that occasionally there was bullying at the school but that this was dealt with quickly and effectively. They all said that if they ever had any worries they went to the learning mentor, in whom they had absolute confidence.
- The learning mentor offers a range of opportunities for pupils to build their personal confidence, to establish friendship groups and to help them settle into the school or adapt to the change from one key stage to the next. She also provides bereavement counselling for pupils. The range of support offered by the learning mentor helps pupils to develop resilience and to manage their own emotions.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. In every classroom, there is a focal point for reflection. The record of assemblies shows that, through the daily acts of collective worship, the pupils explore a range of themes related to religious and moral issues. Pupils learn about different faiths and respect people's differences.
- The pupils are tolerant and supportive of each other and have the opportunity to represent their year groups on the school council. They regularly raise money for charity, showing considerable initiative in doing so. For example, some of the younger children decided to donate the money they received from the 'tooth fairy' to the fund for supporting the Bethany Project, through which the school is linked to a community in Tanzania. One boy recently established a fund to raise money for Syrian refugees.
- Since the last inspection, the school has grown considerably and now includes pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. The pupils relate well to each other and the school is a harmonious community. However, the displays in the corridors and other general areas do not reflect the full range of cultures represented within the pupil population.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The pupils are cheerful, friendly, polite and happy around the school. They take pride in their appearance and take good care of the new school buildings, equipment and books.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons, have the right materials with them and keep to clear routines established by the staff. Even the youngest pupils can be relied on to collect and return resources to the right place in the classrooms or the library. During the inspection, most of the pupils stayed indoors at breaktimes because of the bad weather. They spent this time productively, playing with toys and games and chatting to each other and to the adults in the room. Those who braved the outdoors made full use of the extensive grounds and played a range of games, some of which, however, occasionally got rather too lively.
- In the lessons observed, most pupils behaved well. However, they occasionally lost concentration and fidgeted. Not all pupils know how to express their ideas when talking to adults or how to take turns in a conversation. Occasionally pupils became overly distracted by the sight of visitors to their school and classrooms.
- In previous years, attendance has been below average. The situation has improved and the school's most recent figures show that attendance is currently in line with the average across the country. There are still some pupils whose attendance is not good enough. The school knows who they are and is working with their families to bring about further improvement.

## Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' command of phonics (linking letters to the sounds they make) is good. In 2015, results in the phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 were above average. Boys, girls, disadvantaged pupils and those for whom English is not an additional language all outperformed their counterparts across the country. This was a considerable improvement on the previous year.
- The most recent overall results for seven-year-olds were in line with the national average. For 11-year-olds, they were above average, particularly for English grammar, punctuation and spelling, the area where results were particularly low at the time of the last inspection.
- In most instances, the progress that the 11-year-olds had made from their starting points was close to, or above, national averages.
- The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils were in line with or above the averages for all pupils across the country.
- The observations of lessons, examination of work and the discussions with pupils during the inspection indicate that the improvements in outcomes made to date are continuing.
- Across the school, pupils write in a range of styles and for a variety of purposes. They use increasingly complex sentences and more extensive vocabulary to make their writing more vivid. Clear progress is evident across the ability ranges. However, the progress made by the most-able is not as great as it could be. For example, pupils in a Key Stage 2 class had written poems on the theme of war. One more able pupil had produced a very interesting poem. It made confident use of rhyme, rhythm and imagery, but two lines did not scan. As result, the flow was interrupted. With a small amount of work, this could have been rectified and the poem could have been an excellent one. However, the pupil had not been challenged to make those improvements. As a result, the work fell below the high standard of which this pupil was clearly capable.
- The inspectors listened to pupils who had received extra help with their reading. Most of them read fluently and had effective strategies for deciphering words that were new to them or that they found difficult. Sometimes, the more confident readers rushed too much, with the result that the meaning and expression were lost. The pupils are very happy to talk about their favourite books and clearly enjoy reading. As one pupil said, 'I like reading because I start daydreaming about the book and imagine I am there'. It is clear that the school is building on the improvements in phonics work and there is continuing progress in this area.
- An examination of books shows that many pupils across the school are making good progress in mathematics. Pupils in Year 6 recently won an inter-schools mathematics competition organised by a local secondary school. Again in mathematics, the most-able are not always challenged sufficiently. For example, there is a tendency for them to keep repeating exercises based on the same concept, even when they have clearly mastered it. There is also limited application of mathematics to real-life situations.

## Early years provision

is good

- Leadership of the early years is strong. The early years leader has an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and takes decisive action to ensure continual improvement. For example, she has developed strong links with the nurseries from which the children come in order to ease children's movement into school and to gain a clearer picture of their abilities on entry. With the support of the headteacher, she has established a very good programme to enable staff to develop their skills and to progress in their careers.
- The safeguarding arrangements are sound. All staff have been trained. Regular risk assessments are conducted of equipment and activities, the results of which are prominently displayed.
- A range of links has been established with parents. The learning journals reflect close collaboration with families, which has contributed to the progress made by the children.
- There has been some variation in the ability of children on entry. In 2014, they were just below the level expected for their age. By summer 2015, 67% had achieved a good level of progress. This was just above the national average and represented a 20-percentage point improvement on the previous year. This year, children's ability on entry was higher and the school predicts that at least 71% of them will reach a good level of development by the end of the year. As the school recognises, there is further work to be done to ensure that the targets set are sufficiently demanding.

- Children in the early years are given the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in all key areas of learning. The learning environment is attractive and inviting and there is a well-developed outdoor area which is used frequently by the children. Staff plan and record their work carefully and adapt activities to suit the needs and interests of particular individuals or groups of children. Lessons are engaging and interesting and the children participate readily and with enthusiasm.
- The children's progress is tracked thoroughly each half term. The learning journals show that good progress is made by children at all ability levels within the setting, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Therefore, it is clear that the recent improvement in outcomes in the early years is set to continue.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119438
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	100002232

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	330
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bill Seed
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephen Crook
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 617035
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stpaulsnelson.co.uk">www.stpaulsnelson.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@st-pauls-nelson.lancs.sch.uk">head@st-pauls-nelson.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3–4 October 2013

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, the school has grown in size and has moved to a new building on a different site.
- It is now larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion pupils who are disadvantaged and therefore supported through the government's pupil premium funding is just above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased and is now well above average. Just under a third of pupils are of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has doubled since the last inspection.
- The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at other than the usual times is similar to the average across the country.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed learning in classes and when pupils worked in small groups.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about it. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- The inspectors examined communications from parents made by letter and through responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents.
- They examined the responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and spoke to staff alone and in groups.
- The lead inspector met four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, as well as representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspectors held meetings with 14 pupils, chosen at random from Reception and Years 1 to 6, and spoke to pupils in classrooms and around the school.
- The inspectors examined a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, and the school improvement plan and policies. They also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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