

Lancaster Ryelands Primary School

Torrisholme Road, Lancaster, Lancashire LA1 2RJ

Inspection dates	21–22 January 2016
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	Requires improvement
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 headteacher and other senior leaders provide determined and focused leadership which has brought about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, and in pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare since the previous inspection.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good. Teachers display secure subject knowledge and ask good questions.
- Pupils work hard and display positive attitudes to learning because lessons are well planned and engaging.
- Pupils' attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection as a result of leaders' efforts, and is now broadly in line with that of other schools nationally.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Highly effective pastoral support systems ensure pupils are safe and well cared for. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils get on well with each other.
- Improvements in the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) are speeding up pupils' progress and have led to a rapid rise in the school's results in the Year 1 screening check.
- Early years provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. As a result, children make good progress and achieve well.
- The school makes good use of the extra funding it receives to engage pupils in sport and games.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement because previous gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly in grammar, punctuation and calculation, are causing pupils to make basic mistakes in their work in literacy and mathematics.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing and mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- Teachers' comments are not always helpful in showing pupils how they could improve their work.
- The outdoor provision for children in Reception class is not as effective as the indoor provision they access, or the provision provided in Nursery.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for pupils, so that more pupils make better than the expected amount of progress by:
 - ensuring that school leaders make sure that teachers use the school's marking policy more consistently to help pupils improve their work
 - making sure that previous gaps in pupils' knowledge, particularly in grammar, punctuation and mathematical calculation, are addressed further so that basic mistakes are eliminated
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their writing and mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.

- Ensure that the outdoor environment for children in Reception classes matches the effective quality of the indoor environment and that of the Nursery.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- As a result of determined and focused leadership from the headteacher, senior leaders and governors, the school has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Leaders have been successful in developing a caring and nurturing culture which ensures that pupils are happy coming to school and are ready to learn.
- Since the previous inspection, the monitoring of teaching and learning has become more effective. This has played a key role in improving the quality of teaching across the school, as it has helped to ensure that staff receive appropriate training to develop their professional skills. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good.
- The systems to check on teachers' performance are followed rigorously. Challenging targets are set for staff that are linked to whole-school priorities and pupils' progress. Senior leaders review how well teachers are meeting their targets on a regular basis and take action where necessary.
- Middle leaders in the school are thriving. They relish the role that they are playing in bringing about improvements in different areas of the school's work and provide good capacity for the school to continue to improve at a rapid rate.
- Through improvements in teaching, most pupils are making the progress they should. However, gaps in learning still remain as a result of less effective teaching in the past. As a result, over time, fewer pupils have made better than the expected amount of progress. Leaders are successfully putting in place strategies and systems, such as teaching sessions specifically focused on basic skills, to address this legacy of underachievement and, as a result, pupils' progress is now accelerating, and a rapidly increasing number of pupils are making more than the expected amount of progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide additional help and support. The well-regarded pupil support manager works with pupils and their families to remove barriers to learning and is absolutely committed to ensuring that every pupil has the best possible chance to succeed. Additional staff provide extra support for pupils who need it so that they catch up with their classmates. Leaders maintain detailed records of the additional provision that pupils receive and its impact on their learning and attendance.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of interesting learning opportunities, which are enhanced by visitors coming into school, an example being a group delivering a science show about earth and outer space, and trips to local museums and galleries. Pupils enjoy talking about practical activities that they have enjoyed, such as making their own Roman shields or models of the human digestive system. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including sport and art, provide pupils with further opportunities to develop new skills. However, opportunities to further develop key skills in literacy and mathematics in other areas of the curriculum are not consistently taken.
- Provision for pupils' social, moral and cultural development is good and pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. The school teaches pupils effectively about fundamental British values, such as responsibility, and this work is then linked to different activities such as charity fundraising to highlight those values in action. Work on democracy was enhanced by members of the school council taking part in local 'Pupil Parliament' activities which included meeting the Mayor of Lancaster.
- Leaders make good use of the additional physical education (PE) and sports funding. Pupils' levels of participation have increased as a result of the wide range of activities on offer after school, such as netball and indoor athletics. Pupils enjoy representing the school in competitions with other schools.
- The large majority of parents who spoke to inspectors were very supportive of the school and the improvements that they had seen. The view of one parent that, 'the teachers work very hard to ensure the pupils have great learning opportunities. They really care about the pupils and about involving families in the life of the school,' was echoed by others and backed up by the outcomes of the school's own recent parents' survey.

■ The governance of the school

- The quality of governance is good and since the previous inspection has improved, partly because of the appointment to the governing body of new governors who have a wealth of relevant skills and experience. Governors hold senior leaders to account and have a well-informed view of how well the school is performing. They are proud of the school's improvement since the previous inspection, but are equally aware that there is room for further improvement, particularly in outcomes for pupils.
 - Governors know that the quality of teaching has improved and is now good because they regularly come into school to find out for themselves. They ensure that teachers' pay progression is closely linked to their targets and that consistently good teaching is rewarded.
 - Governors have a firm grasp of the school's finances and ensure that spending decisions, such as enhancing the outdoor environment for Key Stage 1 pupils, have a positive impact on pupils' experiences in school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all necessary policies and procedures are in place, and have responded quickly and effectively where parents have expressed concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, including in the early years, is good. It has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefited from well-planned professional development opportunities that have helped them to develop their subject knowledge and skills.
- Teachers regularly monitor how well pupils are doing and use that information to plan future learning, so that learning builds on pupils' prior knowledge and is interesting and engaging.
- Teachers throughout the school have successfully created an environment that encourages pupils to learn with confidence and independence. Attractive displays celebrate pupils' learning successes and encourage them to do more. As a result of the confidence that they have developed, pupils are happy to offer answers and ask questions.
- Reading is improving as a result of effective teaching, and phonics is also taught well. This is helping readers in Key Stage 1 to gain confidence and fluency in reading. At Key Stage 2, reading has been prioritised by the school leaders. Pupils take part in daily reading sessions and are challenged to read regularly at home, which the large majority of pupils now do. As a result, older pupils are able to talk confidently and in detail about choices that an author has made and the effect that these have on the reader.
- Good teaching is leading to rapidly improving progress in writing. Teachers develop pupils' writing skills well, and pupils are able to write with increasing effect in a range of different styles, as seen in an attractive display of persuasive texts written by Year 6 pupils to advertise chocolate bars and sweets that they had designed. Pupils' written work displays an increasing vocabulary, as teachers encourage them to try out more adventurous word choices. Expectations of the amount and complexity of writing required of pupils in Key Stage 1 are increasing, as was seen when Year 1 pupils were writing about 'The Ugly Duckling'. However, the legacy of previous underachievement means that pupils are still prone to making errors that impact on the overall effect of their writing, and they do not always have sufficient opportunities to further practise and develop their writing skills within other areas of the curriculum.
- In mathematics, teachers ensure that pupils learn new concepts well and benefit from having the opportunity to try them out in the context of solving real-life problems. Teachers use questioning effectively to encourage pupils to explain their mathematical thinking, and are quick to tackle any errors that are the result of less secure prior learning. Pupils are seldom challenged to use their mathematical skills in other subjects, which reduces the opportunities that they have to consolidate ideas and eliminate errors.
- The large majority of teachers follow the school's marking policy consistently and use it to help pupils to improve their work. At times, although detailed, teachers' feedback is not useful in helping pupils to understand how to make their work better. The school has a large number of teaching assistants who work well alongside the teachers to provide effective support and encouragement to the pupils, asking clear questions and prompting them to move on in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The highly effective pupil support team ensures that pupils are well cared for and that they always have someone whom they can talk to whenever the need arises.
- Additional support for younger pupils who most need it, through the work of learning mentors and the nurture classes, has been effective in preparing them for learning much more effectively.
- Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They get on well with each other, and older pupils show good levels of care towards younger pupils in the school, for instance at lunchtimes.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, because this is addressed well through the curriculum. They know about different forms of bullying, including bullying using racist or homophobic language, but say that bullying in school is very rare and any incidents that occur are always quickly dealt with by members of staff.
- Older pupils speak confidently about their learning and recognise the value of the work that they do at home as well as in school. One pupil commented, 'I enjoy finding things out at home. My dad likes helping me too'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is reflected in their conduct around school and on the playground, and in the positive attitudes to learning that pupils display in class.
- Pupils talk about improvements in behaviour that they have seen. They say that the school's system of having pupils who have done something wrong write a letter of apology has made pupils think more carefully about their behaviour, so that incidents of poor behaviour are now very rare.
- Staff manage pupils' behaviour well. All staff are thoroughly familiar with the behaviour policy and pupils fully understand the school's system of rewards and sanctions.
- Attendance is improving and is currently broadly in line with the national average. The school's efforts to promote and encourage good attendance are paying off and the number of pupils who miss school regularly is reducing.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Outcomes for pupils require improvement overall, because although the majority of pupils make expected progress, over time the proportion making more than expected progress from their different starting points is below the national average. Current progress is now accelerating and more pupils are on track to make more than the expected amount of progress this year.
- In the national tests and assessments in 2015, standards at the end of Year 2 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were also below average. As a result, pupils were not well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics check in 2015 was in line with the national average and has risen strongly since the previous inspection.
- Progress across the school is improving and a larger proportion of pupils currently in Year 2 are on track to achieve the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics this year, building on the good start that they got in the early years and Year 1.
- The proportion of pupils on track to achieve the expected levels in reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 this year is also increasing, while support is in place to increase progress in writing for current pupils in Year 6 to help them overcome gaps in their prior knowledge that are the legacy of previous weak teaching. However, there are still few pupils who are working above age-related levels in reading, writing and mathematics in upper Key Stage 2, because pupils are still making up for slow progress in the past.

- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving overall, although there are still some inconsistencies. Their attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved since the previous inspection. However, by the end of Year 6 in 2015, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was still around four terms behind that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics, and a year behind in writing. Detailed tracking of the impact of support accessed by disadvantaged pupils currently in the school indicates that their progress is accelerating, and typically gaps between their attainment and those of their classmates are closing. For example, in the Year 1 phonics check in 2015, disadvantaged pupils achieved more highly than their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress overall from their varying starting points. This is because they are supported and challenged well, benefiting from effective interventions and the provision of specialist support such as the nurture classes. By the end of Key Stage 2, their achievement is in line with national figures for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.

Early years provision

is good

- Children start in Nursery with knowledge and skills that are lower than is typical for their age in almost all areas of learning, but particularly so in their literacy and numeracy skills, and their personal and social development.
- Children settle quickly and are keen to learn. Their progress in Nursery is good because teaching is good. Staff observe and assess children's learning and development carefully and plan activities that build on children's skills and interests. The Nursery environment, both indoors and outdoors, is attractive and encourages children to learn and explore new things.
- Good progress is maintained in Reception, where staff place firm emphasis on the teaching of phonics and the development of children's speaking and listening skills. Children's knowledge of number is encouraged through a range of engaging activities. As a result, the percentage of children achieving a good level of development for the last two years has been broadly in line with the national average.
- The leadership of the early years is good. The leader is driving up the quality of teaching and learning, and has a clear awareness of areas that could still be improved. One of these is the outdoor area accessed by Reception children which, although sizeable, does not yet provide the same quality of learning experiences as the indoor space.
- Parents are encouraged to engage in various activities and workshops at school so that they can help their children more effectively at home. These good links between home and school are helping more children to make good progress.
- Children's behaviour in early years is good. There is a harmonious atmosphere in both Nursery and Reception and relationships between adults and children are warm and positive.

School details

Unique reference number	119132
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10009905

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Len Guest
Headteacher	Linda Pye
Telephone number	01524 64626
Website	www.ryelands.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	admin@ryelands.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2014

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is well above 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.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- Children in the early years provision attend Nursery on a part-time basis. Children attend the Reception class on a full-time basis.
- 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 a number of staffing changes since the previous inspection, including within the school leadership. The headteacher took up her position in September 2014.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised with senior leaders.
- Informal meetings were held with parents at the beginning of the school day. Separate meetings were held with two parents. Inspectors also took account of a small number of responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the school's own parents' questionnaire. Responses to the inspection questionnaire completed by 23 members of staff were considered.
- Meetings were held with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. Meetings were also held with school leaders responsible for English and mathematics, and provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and children in the early years.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents. These included information about pupils' progress, the school's reviews of its own performance and checks on the quality of teaching, development plans, safeguarding documentation and various records of pupils' attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Neil Dixon, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Peach	Ofsted Inspector

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