

# Leyland Methodist Junior School

Canberra Road, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 3ET

**Inspection dates** 27–28 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide effective leadership for this good school. They have established a culture where staff and pupils are valued and can thrive. This has led to rapid improvements in the quality of teaching and pupil behaviour.
- Pupil outcomes are now good. Current learners, including the most able, make at least good and sometimes better progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs benefit from carefully focused support. This helps them make good progress from their starting points.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to carefully check the progress made by pupils. They mark work and plan activities to move learning on well.
- Attendance is high.
- Pupils are happy and they behave well. They feel safe and well-cared for. Almost all parents spoken to, and the vast majority responding to Parent View and the school's own questionnaires, agree.
- The curriculum is broad and exciting. It develops pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well. Gaps in learning arising from weaker teaching in the past are successfully being overcome.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- Senior leaders have established reliable systems to check on and secure improvement in the quality of teaching and other aspects of the school's work.
- Knowledgeable and committed governors rigorously check the work of the school. They continuously support and challenge school leaders and staff to improve.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The science curriculum does not give pupils enough opportunities to plan different types of scientific enquiries or to make appropriate choices about how to record their findings.
- The teaching of handwriting is inconsistent.
- At times, in their eagerness to write, pupils' spelling can become careless and the presentation of their work can become untidy.
- Some middle leaders are at an early stage in developing the skills to lead improvements in their areas of responsibility.

## Full report

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

In order to build successfully upon recent rapid improvements, the school should:

- further strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that all middle leaders know how to check teaching so that they can identify where improvements can be made
- ensure that the science curriculum provides more opportunities for pupils to design their own investigations and choose how to report their findings
- ensure that pupils present their work neatly and use the correct spelling when they write
- develop a consistently neat and joined-up handwriting style across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Senior leaders and governors have maintained a firm and determined drive to improve the school since the previous inspection. The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteachers, has successfully established a cohesive and well-motivated staff team. All work together to ensure a consistent approach to learning and, as a result, the quality of teaching, assessment and behaviour and the progress made by pupils have all improved significantly. This indicates a strong capacity for further improvement.
- The school's evaluation of its own strengths and areas for development are well thought out and accurate. Checks on the quality of teaching are thorough and information gained is used well to set targets for improvement. Training in reading, writing and mathematics has helped to improve teachers' skills and their subject knowledge.
- Leaders track the progress of all pupils regularly and robustly. Pupils identified at risk of being 'left behind' are identified quickly, and well-targeted interventions are put in place to enable them to get back on track. Senior leaders pay particular attention to boosting the progress made by some of the older pupils who have gaps in their learning due to a legacy of weak teaching in the past.
- The provision for pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs is led well. The needs of pupils are quickly identified and individual learning plans are developed and put into place. The small group of pupils who sometimes struggle to thrive in a large class setting gain much from the support that they receive when they attend the 'beehive' provision each morning.
- Stronger links with parents and families established since the previous inspection help families support their children's achievement. The large majority of parents who respond to Parent View and the school's own questionnaire are pleased with the education provided by the school.
- The primary school sports funding has been used effectively to increase the opportunities for pupils to take part in a wider range of sports. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about sport, with a higher proportion taking part in competitive activities.
- Pupils learn a broad range of subjects through topics that have been chosen to engage their interest. They particularly enjoy the weekly lessons provided by the specialist language teacher who helps them learn to speak Spanish. During the inspection, for example, Year 3 pupils spoke with great confidence and increasing fluency as they played a game designed to help them practise using the Spanish vocabulary they had learned in earlier lessons. Their teacher ensured that pupils used the correct expression and pronunciation throughout the lesson.
- The curriculum is well-enriched by clubs and visits. When developing reading, writing and mathematics skills, pupils are provided with the full range of curriculum opportunities that they need to develop their skills. However, pupils' books show that the science curriculum is not yet implemented as effectively. As a result, pupils do not get the same opportunities to design investigations or record their work as they choose.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support eligible pupils through well-planned, targeted activities. This has helped to improve the progress of these pupils and close the attainment gaps between them and the others in the school.
- The impact of the work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is impressive and is underpinned by the school's Christian ethos. Pupils take on positions of responsibility, learn about different world religions and raise money for charities. This results in pupils having a respect for other cultures and a strong sense of justice. The school actively encourages the promotion of British values and is effectively helping pupils understand and prepare for life in modern Britain.
- Knowledgeable subject leaders of English and mathematics have played a key role in improving outcomes for pupils. They monitor the provision and provide high-quality training, coaching and support for teaching and support staff. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and hardworking but some are new to their roles so they do not yet have the skills to fully help drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- The local authority knows the school well. Leaders value the training and monitoring the local authority provides. The school regularly shares its practice with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has been very effective in helping to drive forward many improvements since the previous inspection. Governors make regular, focused visits to the school. They use the information they gather from these visits and the detailed reports they receive from school leaders to rigorously

check all aspects of the school's work. This means that governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils.

- Minutes of meetings confirm that governors challenge and support leaders appropriately. Arrangements for teachers' performance management are in place and governors ensure that teachers' pay progression is linked to the outcomes of pupils in their care.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff receive regular child protection training, and vetting of staff and visitors is robust. Governors ensure that procedures are kept up to date and are regularly reviewed. The school takes seriously its duty to help prevent extremism and radicalisation.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Senior leaders' clear focus on improving the quality of teaching has proven successful. Teaching is now consistently good throughout the school so that standards are rising and the learning and progress seen in pupils' books are good. Teaching in the past has not been as effective and has left a legacy of underachievement. However, consistently good teaching last year and during this academic year is helping to close gaps and enabling all groups of pupils to catch up. Work this year in pupils' books confirms that they are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan work that captures the imagination of pupils so that they work hard and want to learn. Teaching stretches the most-able pupils well. For example, in Year 6 in mathematics pupils are given the opportunity to tackle work at a very high level for their age, using four quadrant coordinates when translating and rotating complex shapes.
- Good relationships exist between staff and pupils. Teachers encourage pupils to challenge themselves and 'have a go'. They skilfully ask questions to check how well pupils are doing and provide clear explanations to move learning on. Teachers mark work in line with the school's policy, providing clear next steps, which successfully help pupils improve their work.
- The school's focus on improving reading and the use of grammar and punctuation has proved successful. Pupils read fluently and accurately and write at length and in complex sentences at levels at least appropriate for their age. They regularly draft, edit and improve their work when they write extended pieces. However, sometimes pupils are so eager to write in literacy lessons and when they work in other subjects that presentation can become untidy and spelling can become careless. Teachers do not always remind them to take care with these aspects of their work.
- School leaders are still to develop the teaching of a consistent joined handwriting style across the school.
- Pupils enjoy learning about the world about them in their science topics. However, unlike in English and mathematics, where pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and choose how to record their work, science books show that pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan their own investigations and record their work as they choose.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is particularly effective. This is because these pupils' personal and learning needs are identified quickly and accurately and addressed through skilful teaching by well-trained teachers and support staff.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are happy, friendly and well-mannered. They are confident learners and are very proud of their school.
- Pupils treat each other with respect and get along well together. Sometimes, when they play outside, they get so excited and involved in their games that they do not think enough about how their actions may affect others, and the school staff on duty need to remind them to take care. They respond well to these reminders.
- Pupils have a very good awareness of the issues surrounding bullying, including that of cyber- and prejudiced-based bullying. The well-trained anti-bullying ambassadors take great pride in their role to help other pupils on the playground and around school. During the inspection, a number of parents raised concerns about bullying and inspectors discussed this issue with pupils. Pupils said there are occasional instances of bullying but they trust staff to deal with these promptly. The online survey that pupils

complete for the school as well as the large majority of parents responding to Parent View and the school's most recent questionnaire confirm this view and indicate that pupils are kept safe.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils move to and from lessons and the playgrounds with a minimum of disruption or delay.
- Attitudes to learning are very positive. There is lively learning 'buzz' evident throughout the school and pupils thrive on challenge. They concentrate well, work hard and are keen to succeed. This is reflected in the work in pupils' books. Pupils complete a good quantity of written work for their age that captures the interests of the reader well. However, on occasion, they are so eager to get their ideas down on paper that they overlook the need to present work neatly and ensure that the correct spellings are used.
- Attendance is high and pupils attend school punctually.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **are good**

- Decisive action taken by senior leaders to eliminate weak teaching and raise standards has resulted in sustained improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment is rising for all pupils, including the most able. Improved teaching has led to more secure development of pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. This is noticeable in the work in pupils' books
- Pupils join the school in Year 3 with attainment that is at least broadly average and sometimes higher.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015, pupils reached standards broadly in line with the national average in reading and writing. However, attainment in mathematics and grammar and spelling was below average because fewer than average pupils reached the higher levels in these subjects. Almost all pupils made the progress expected of them in all subjects, but the proportion doing better than this was lower than average.
- Nevertheless, inspection evidence shows that pupils in this year group made more rapid progress during their time in Years 5 and 6 compared to their first two years in the school. Gaps in skills caused by earlier weaker teaching began to close due to improved teaching.
- This trend of rapidly improving progress has continued. Across the school, current pupils achieve well in reading and writing because teaching develops key skills, including those of grammar, effectively. It provides many opportunities for pupils to read widely and to write across different subjects. All year groups tackle books that are considered challenging for their age and daily reading activities help pupils to read fluently and write imaginatively and at length.
- Mathematical skills are also now developed effectively for current learners. Teachers ensure that learning moves at a good pace and the use of challenges and investigations are integral elements of each lesson. As a result, pupils confidently apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to tackle problems.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has strengthened the demands it places on the most-able pupils in all subjects. As with other pupils, they are given work which challenges their thinking and a good proportion of these pupils are now making better than expected progress and working at levels above those expected for their age.
- Effective systems are in place to help the school to track pupils' progress and to identify pupils who are not doing well enough. Pupils receive the support that they need to help them catch up.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs continue to make good progress and achieve well as a result of swift and accurate identification of their individual social, emotional and learning needs.
- The pupil premium continues to be used well. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils in the school and others nationally and in the school continue to close.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119400
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002253

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	263
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Matthew Tomlinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathryn Melling
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 423694
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lmjs.lancs.sch.uk">www.lmjs.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@lmjs.lancs.sch.uk">head@lmjs.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16–17 October 2016

## Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are similar to the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil-premium funding is below that found in most other schools. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for 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 pupils who join or leave the school at other than the usual times is below the national average.
- The school has experienced significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection. Four teachers left the school and others, including the two assistant headteachers, have joined the staff. The senior leadership team has been restructured.
- 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.
- A private provider offers before-and-after-school provision on the school premises. This provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements. The relevant inspection reports may be viewed on the Ofsted website.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 learned in small groups, including some observations made jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about their work. They listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills. Inspectors talked to pupils about the books they have enjoyed and those that they are currently reading. Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- Inspectors talked with pupils informally as they played at breaktimes, visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school. They met formally with three groups of pupils.
- Inspectors met with five governors. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with members of school staff.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day and took account of 66 responses to Parent View and the school's most recent surveys of pupils' and parents' views.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, school improvement and external views of the school. Inspectors also scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding completed by school staff.

## Inspection team

Lyn Pender, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Maria McGarry	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Smith	Ofsted Inspector

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