

Delph Side Community Primary School

Eskdale, Tanhouse, Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 6ED

Inspection dates	25–26 May 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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Delph Side has improved significantly since it was last inspected. It is now a good school.
- The headteacher, working closely with the deputy headteacher and governors, has successfully improved teaching so it is now consistently good.
- Teachers know pupils well and skilfully plan lessons which capture their imaginations and meet their individual needs.
- From starting points that are typically lower than expected, pupils make good progress in all subjects.
- The standards achieved by pupils are much higher than they were at the time of the last inspection.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive good, focused support and make good progress.
- All pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are well-cared-for.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy school. They know how to keep themselves and others safe in and out of school.
- Pupils who join the school during the school year, including those with limited English, settle quickly and soon make friends.
- The curriculum is rich and engaging. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has a high priority.
- Governors hold leaders to account to good effect. They know the school's strengths and what needs to be further improved.
- Subject leaders play an effective role in securing improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- Good teaching and effective leadership in the early years ensure that children enjoy learning and make good progress in Nursery and Reception.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although they are closing, there are still some gaps in pupils' basic grammar, spelling, punctuation and mathematics skills.
- The new assessment system does not yet provide an accurate picture of how well pupils are doing.
- Sometimes pupils' work contains too many careless mistakes and presentation is untidy.
- The teaching of handwriting is not consistent from class to class.
- There are too few measureable targets in school improvement plans to help leaders and governors precisely check the school's progress towards achieving its priorities for improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching in order to increase the progress made by pupils and raise standards further by making sure that:
 - any gaps in pupils' learning of basic skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation and mathematics are eradicated
 - pupils present their work neatly and free from careless mistakes
 - handwriting is taught consistently well across the school.
- Continue to develop the new assessment systems to give leaders and teachers an accurate picture of the attainment and progress made by pupils.
- Include measurable outcomes for improvement targets related to pupils' attainment and progress, against which school leaders and governors can judge the impact of the priorities they have set to improve teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and highly skilled governors, provides strong leadership for Delph Side. Collectively, they have securely driven improvements in teaching, learning and pupils' achievement since the school's previous inspection. They have created a culture in which all pupils want to do their very best.
- Responses to the inspection questionnaire by staff are unanimously positive; all feel well-supported by school leaders. Morale is high because staff feel valued and supported. A culture exists where everyone is striving to do the best for the pupils to help them make the most of the opportunities life has to offer. In turn, pupils show similarly high ambitions to make good progress.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. The member of staff nominated as the 'champion' of disadvantaged pupils in the school helps ensure that these pupils do at least as well as their peers. Senior leaders and governors keep a close check on the impact of this funding on pupils' academic and emotional development. Pupils are provided with experiences they might not have otherwise. These include participation in activities with their families and visits to different places of interest.
- Senior leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement plans are sharper than at the time of the previous inspection and contain the correct priorities. However, some targets do not have precisely measureable outcomes against which senior leaders and governors can fully gauge the school's progress.
- Middle leaders, some of whom are new to the school, have embraced their roles well since the previous inspection. They provide support and training for colleagues and carry out regular checks on teaching and learning in the subjects or areas for which they have responsibility. This has helped to secure a good deal of consistency, including among staff who are new to the school. Leaders at all levels are confident that the improvements they have helped to bring about are sustainable.
- Leaders have planned the school's curriculum well. Subjects inspire pupils and give them rich learning experiences that enhance their academic progress as well as promoting their personal development. The curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. As well as focusing on improving outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics, school leaders have ensured that pupils' learning in others subjects, including science and French, has continued. The development of pupils' understanding of British values is given a high priority throughout all the school does. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The variety of opportunities and experiences provided for pupils strongly promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are welcomed into the school and no discrimination of any type is tolerated. Pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths is particularly well developed through visits to local places of worship and through visitors to the school.
- The sports funding for primary schools is used well to promote pupils' well-being and increase their participation in sporting activities. For example, pupils understand the importance of keeping active and are learning about how to make healthy choices when they eat. A sports coach regularly provides specialist coaching for pupils and training for staff to improve the teaching of physical education. Pupils are particularly proud of the range of sporting competitions in which they have participated this year.
- Almost half of the pupils in the school attend the popular breakfast club which the governors provide, without charge, for pupils of all ages. This is one of the many measures leaders have taken to bring about improvements in punctuality and attendance.
- Leaders have developed ways to assess and track pupils' progress within all subjects in the curriculum. These new systems are providing increasingly precise information about pupils' progress. However, they do not yet provide a fully accurate or consistent picture of the standards reached by pupils.
- Senior leaders check carefully all aspects of school and provide summary reports for governors. For example, behaviour records are detailed and are reviewed weekly to check for any patterns and enable prompt action to be taken if necessary.
- Local authority staff have worked with leaders to help improve the school and support governors with issues related to changes in staffing. The school's approach to using the pupil premium funding is now being shared as an example of effective practice with other schools in the local authority.

■ The governance of the school

- Governance is good.
 - Leadership and management of the school has benefited immensely from the review of governance undertaken following the previous inspection. All the present governors have been appointed since that time. They bring a broad range of relevant skills, expertise and high levels of commitment to their roles.
 - Governors now have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They regularly visit classrooms to gain first-hand experiences of the life of the school and to check the information provided for them by the headteacher and other leaders.
 - Governors hold leaders rigorously to account for all aspects of the school's performance. Support is effective, for example that provided for the headteacher during the periods of significant staffing turbulence since the previous inspection.
 - Governors are not prepared to tolerate poor teaching. They act decisively when weak teaching hampers pupils' learning. Consequently, they manage the performance of staff robustly.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders have well-established partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies. Staff training is fully up to date and record-keeping is meticulous. School staff work closely with parents and others to ensure that there is high-quality care for all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Improved teaching is ensuring pupils achieve much better outcomes than at the time of the previous inspection. Teaching is now consistently good or better and the impact on learning, including in reading, writing and mathematics, is reflected in the good and sometimes rapid progress pupils make.
- Teachers plan exciting learning tasks. Lessons are interesting and lively. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to pitch work correctly according to pupils' skills and abilities. Work at the right level of challenge is provided to enable all pupils, including the most able, to make at least good progress. Those pupils who have gaps in learning arising from earlier weaknesses in teaching are helped to catch up.
- Teaching assistants and teachers work closely together to ensure that timely and constructive advice and support is provided for pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disability. They provide good support to pupils working in groups or on an individual basis.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve; however, sometimes they accept untidy and poorly presented work rather than expecting the best possible standard from pupils at all times.
- The school's marking policy is followed consistently by all teachers. The feedback provided is of a high standard and teachers allow time for pupils to read and respond to the advice given. However, opportunities for pupils to check their work for any careless spellings or grammatical errors and make the necessary corrections before it is marked are limited.
- Classrooms are bright and well-organised and pupils' work is displayed proudly around school. Pupils say they like the way that their teachers provide information on 'working walls' in their classrooms. They find this helpful.
- Pupils enjoy the way teachers organise learning for different subjects into topic 'themes'. Pupils write enthusiastically and with imagination, often because their writing is linked to the theme they are studying.
- Reading and the teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) are carefully developed in the early years and into key stage 1, and as a result most pupils get off to a good start in their reading. The range of books available motivates pupils to read widely and often, both at home and in school.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are developed well through regular challenges and opportunities to apply knowledge to solve problems, including when they learn in other subjects. For example, pupils practise using their data-handling skills when drawing up tables to organise the outcomes of science experiments.
- The recent focus on providing homework to improve basic skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation and mathematics is helping pupils to develop their understanding and recall of facts well. Pupils with gaps in learning are making the most rapid progress. However, standards achieved, particularly in Years 4 and 5, remain below where they should be due to earlier weaknesses in teaching.
- Leaders are aware that pupils' handwriting tends to be untidy. Handwriting is not taught consistently well across the school.

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 value the opinions of others and work happily and cooperatively in lessons. Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils work hard and produce very good quantities of work although sometimes the quality is let down by untidy presentation, careless mistakes and the lack of a neat handwriting style.
- Pupils thrive in the positive and caring school environment. Delph Side is an inclusive school where all are welcomed. Pupils new to the school, some of whom speak little English, are helped to settle in well and quickly make new friends. Inspectors observed pupils' quiet contemplation in the corridor where staff had thoughtfully displayed large flags of the nationalities of pupils and adults in the school while a recording of different national anthems played. From time to time, pupils stopped for a few moments – lost in their thoughts.
- Pupils feel safe. They are aware of the different types of bullying that they may encounter, including cyber bullying, and they trust the staff to deal with any incidents quickly. Pupils say that sometimes they fall out of friends with each other and this makes them unhappy. At times they willingly accept the help of adults to help them sort things out. The above average movement of pupils in and out of school at other than the usual time sometimes makes it difficult for pupils to maintain friendship groups.
- The school regularly seeks the views of pupils and parents. During recent months, for example, leaders checked on the views of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs or disability. They confirmed they are happy and well-cared-for in school. In addition, the vast majority of parents who responded to a recent survey about behaviour said that their children are kept safe and that behaviour is good. During the inspection a small number of responses to the online survey, Parent View, raised concerns about bullying and the quality of the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors considered a wide range of information and found no evidence to support these concerns.
- Pupils are very proud of their school, and enjoy many opportunities to be involved in the life of the school and take decisions, for example, through the very active school council.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The survey completed by pupils during the inspection was overwhelmingly positive. Pupils say they enjoy school and their learning. They feel safe and know there is always an adult ready to listen to them. They think behaviour is good around school.
- Pupils respond well to the high expectations of behaviour set by staff. Pupils' behaviour in the playground, in the dining hall, in the breakfast club and after-school clubs is generally very good. The new behaviour code is well understood by all and pupils think the adults apply rewards and sanctions fairly.
- The learning mentor provides support for those who sometimes find it a challenge to manage their own behaviour. At lunchtime the 'thinking room' is used effectively to help pupils make the right decisions, reflect on poor choices and rebuild friendships.
- Due to the concerted efforts of pupils, parents and staff, pupils' attendance has improved since the previous inspection. Attendance levels are now closer to the national average, having risen from the very low levels seen in recent years. The proportion of pupils missing school regularly is now much lower than the national average.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- From starting points when pupils join the school, which are often lower than typically expected for their age, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This good progress is repeated in other subjects including science and geography. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education.
- In the 2015 national checks on how well pupils know the sounds which letters make (phonics), pupils attained outcomes which were higher than the national average in Year 1. Nearly all pupils met the standard for their age by the end of Year 2.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 have increased steadily each year since the previous inspection. They are broadly in line with the national average. Checks made by inspectors on the latest school performance information and other inspection evidence reveal that pupils across key stage 1 are progressing well and standards continue to improve.

- At the end of Year 6 in 2015, standards in reading, writing, grammar, spelling, punctuation and mathematics improved to in line with the national average from the well-below-average standards seen in the previous two years. Again, checks carried out by inspectors on work in pupils' books and displayed around the school show that improvement continues. Good, and sometimes rapid, progress is now being made across key stage 2. Progress is faster in those year groups that have experienced weaker teaching in the past, particularly in the current Year 4 and 5 classes. Some gaps remain in pupils' basic reading, writing and mathematics skills but the more rapid progress taking place now is helping to close these. As a result, pupils are beginning to catch up to the standards expected for their age.
- Many pupils join the school mid-year or leave the school before the normal point of leaving at the end of Year 6. Some new entrants are new to speaking English when they arrive. Pupils who join the school at other than usual times make good progress from their different starting points. The longer pupils are in the school the better progress they make.
- As a result of effective use of pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils now do much better at the school than in previous years. By the end of Year 6 in 2015, disadvantaged pupils in Delph Side achieved standards above their peers in school and in line with other pupils nationally. They made at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils at risk of falling behind. Staff make effective provision for these pupils in class, in small groups and individually. This includes pupils who have special educational needs or disability. These pupils all make at least good progress because activities provided by teachers are well-matched to their needs and abilities.
- Gaps between the attainment and progress of boys and girls are closing because teachers have adapted the curriculum to capture the interests of boys more readily. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress and reach similar standards to their classmates.

Early years provision

is good

- Children have a very settled start to the day in the early years. They arrive at school ready to learn in the bright and well-organised learning environment. Children become increasingly independent as they follow well-established classroom routines.
- Many children start in the early years with knowledge and skills that are typically lower than those expected for their age in almost all areas of learning. This is particularly true for children's communication and language skills and social development.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have a clear understanding of how children learn and, ably supported by well-trained teaching assistants, they skilfully help them make at least typical and increasingly better progress in the early years. In 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception was close to the national average. Inspection evidence and the school's latest performance information show that children are on track to exceed the 2015 outcomes this year. Children are well-prepared to join Year 1.
- Staff make language development a priority and children benefit greatly from personalised support, including speech therapy. Adults interact well with children, modelling language and encouraging children to explain what they are doing and communicate with others.
- The new leader of the early years has a clear understanding of the strengths of the setting and where improvements are needed. Staff regularly check how well children are doing and record information about their learning systematically. They use the information well in planning and to move learning on in lessons.
- Funding to support the learning of disadvantaged children is used well in the early years and there is little difference in the progress made by disadvantaged children and other children in the school.
- Adults observe children carefully and build on their interests using questions to fire their imagination and curiosity. They work skilfully alongside children to support their learning, stepping back at the right time to allow children to explore and develop their own ideas. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's social skills; they are encouraged to take turns as they play and learn together.
- Parents say how pleased they are to be involved in helping their children learn. They comment positively about the care their children receive and how they enjoy learning in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Safeguarding is given a high priority. All staff are vigilant in ensuring children's health, safety and emotional and physical well-being at all times.

School details

Unique reference number	119304
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10012123

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	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Neil Scanlan
Headteacher	Christan Upton
Telephone number	01695 721881
Website	www.delph.lancsngfl.ac.uk
Email address	head@delphside.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 January 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools. The proportion of boys who attend the school is much higher than average. In some year groups around two-thirds of pupils are boys.
- Children attend the Nursery class part time and attend the Reception class full time.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has tripled since the previous inspection and is now similar to the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with pupils from 'Any other White' backgrounds forming the next largest group.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has doubled since the previous inspection and is now above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided for those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Since the previous inspection the school has experienced significant staffing changes. Several members of staff experienced periods of long term absence and five teachers left the school. Around a third of staff are new to the school. Changes to the leadership and management team include the appointment of a new deputy headteacher and new leaders of the early years and special educational needs provision. Several other leaders, including for English and mathematics, are new to their posts since the previous inspection.
- All members of the governing body have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school is an active member of the SHARES Lancashire cluster of schools.
- A private provider offers after-school childcare on the school premises during term time. This provision is subject to separate inspection arrangements. Inspection reports may be viewed on the Ofsted website.

- The school meets the requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- 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.

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.
- 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 and the learning taking place outdoors.
- 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 four governors. They spoke to two representatives 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 24 responses to Parent View (Ofsted's online questionnaire) and the school's most recent surveys of pupils' and parents' views. Twenty-four returns to the staff questionnaire and 72 responses to the pupils' questionnaires completed during the inspection were considered.
- 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

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