

Seven Stars Primary School

Peacock Hall Road, Leyland, Lancashire PR25 1TD

Inspection dates

15–16 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
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 headteacher has created a strong sense of purpose in the school. Morale is high and striving for the best is the ambition of all. His firm but sensitive leadership has been a major factor in the improvement that has taken place since the previous inspection.
- The restructured leadership teams are working well. Leaders work closely with individual teachers to improve their practice. As a result, teaching has become consistently good, as has pupils' progress. Standards are rising.
- Governors know the school well. They have the skills and understanding to challenge leaders to maintain the drive for improvement. The governing body ensures that pupils are safe, well cared for and make good progress.
- Children in the early years make good progress in all areas of learning. Staff work closely with parents to check and support the children's development.
- Leaders and governors make sure that pupil premium funding is helping disadvantaged pupils to make good progress. They also make sure that there is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the school and what it does for their children.
- The curriculum is planned well. The wide range of experiences available to pupils, academically and personally, make school an exciting place for them to be. Pupils say so, too.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and they are eager to do well. They are kind to each other and they show great respect towards adults. Their behaviour is excellent.
- Staff are extremely vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe and know how to keep themselves safe in and out of school, including online.
- The high level of care provided for pupils helps them to overcome learning and personal difficulties, to aim high and to become responsible youngsters by the time they leave the school.
- While they make good progress overall, the most able pupils do not always get onto the harder work planned for them in lessons. This limits the extent of their learning.
- The leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics is not yet fully established, Nor are the assessment and marking procedures associated with them.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan and carry out investigations themselves in science.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the good practice seen in some lessons by making sure that the most able pupils in all lessons get onto the harder work prepared for them sooner.
- Extend the strategies used by the leaders of English and mathematics to leaders of science and other subjects by ensuring that they:
 - tighten up assessment procedures so that the attainment and progress of individual pupils can be more easily assessed, tracked and improved in their subject
 - ensure that, when teachers give pupils feedback on their learning, they help pupils to improve the knowledge and skills required to make progress in each subject
 - give pupils more opportunities in science to plan and carry out investigations for themselves so that they deepen their understanding of the subject.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The improvement at Seven Stars is down to the determination of the headteacher, senior and other leaders and the governing body to raise standards in all aspects of school life. Leaders have the support and commitment of staff, pupils and parents. All staff are motivated to make sure there is continuing improvement.
- Working with their leaders, the staff help pupils to make good progress and to develop as well-rounded individuals. The restructuring of leadership teams, combined with well-targeted training, means that responsibilities are shared and that leaders at all levels understand their part in school improvement.
- Strengths and areas for improvement are clearly identified in self-evaluation that is accurate, honest and reflective, and involves staff at all levels. The outcomes form the basis of the priorities in the school development plan, the objectives set for staff as part of the management of their performance, and, ultimately, the targets set for pupils.
- Leaders of English and mathematics have regular opportunities to check that all staff are implementing agreed strategies for improvement. This has led to a growing consistency of approach, especially in the teaching of mathematics, the development of reading and writing, and using the agreed marking policy to help pupils improve their work.
- Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are thorough. Where needed, follow up is immediate, yet sensitive and supportive. The school benefits from a stable, happy and dedicated team of staff who create in the pupils a sense of enthusiasm and a desire to succeed.
- The curriculum is planned well to meet the needs of the pupils. It includes all subjects and it promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceedingly well. Pupils also benefit from a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. These include sports, the arts and other clubs and activities that develop pupils' confidence and their social skills.
- Improving outcomes for pupils is a constant focus. The school's new assessment systems are proving effective in helping pupils to make better progress. Senior leaders, and those who lead English and mathematics, analyse all information thoroughly. They then use it effectively to hold staff to account for how well their pupils are doing. Senior leaders give teachers time to discuss their assessments with each other, or with staff from other schools, to ensure they are accurate.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics have ensured that everything required by the national curriculum is taught. However, there are no clear procedures for measuring how well pupils are acquiring knowledge and skills in other subjects, although staff are beginning to use a local authority scheme to help them do so. Good attention is paid to developing literacy and, where appropriate, mathematical skills in different subjects.

- The leadership and organisation of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Needs, be they personal or academic, are identified as early as possible and intervention programmes, including nurture, are tailored to individual pupils to help them succeed. Everything is kept under constant review to ensure that the programmes are working and pupils make good progress.
- Leaders ensure that staff plan harder work for most-able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. This good planning is not as evident in other subjects. Additionally, in some English and mathematics lessons, teachers do not move the most able pupils quickly enough onto the harder work prepared for them, to ensure they can make even faster progress.
- Leaders promote fundamental British values well and staff prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Through assemblies and through the curriculum, pupils learn about the wider community, raise funds for charities and learn about tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. For example, democracy features as they elect school councillors, or learn about how their local council is run by visiting the mayor's parlour, where they engage in role play as councillors.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to reduce the different barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able of them, might experience. Additional staffing, smaller group sizes and nurture activities are particularly helpful in supporting them to do well. Thus, the pupils experience success and can take part in everything the school offers. The impact of pupil premium funding is kept under regular review.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding is also used well. Pupils of all ages benefit from working with sports coaches and find the activities much fun. They learn the value of physical activity as a part of being healthy. Staff, too, benefit from the training they receive to help them teach physical education and sport more effectively.
- The local authority has supported the school well on its journey of improvement. It has withdrawn the intensive support given after the previous inspection because it is now confident in the school's own capacity to improve.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- Governors have used the outcomes of the external review effectively to improve the way they support the school and challenge it to do better.
- Governors gather a wide range of information at first hand, through visits to classes, and through discussions with staff, pupils and parents. They know the school and its strengths and weaknesses well.
- The governing body has a good understanding of the procedures for managing staff performance. Governors support the headteacher in holding staff to account, and in making decisions about teachers' pay increases.
- The governing body is diligent in its responsibilities to safeguard pupils. It oversees and monitors safeguarding and welfare-related matters effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in the school, particularly with reference to the care and welfare of the pupils, a high proportion of whom are disadvantaged. Robust systems are in place; they are shared with parents, and all staff understand them. All training, including for child protection, is fully up to date.
- Leaders are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Effective relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are fully met. The school is vigilant in supporting pupils and their families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour. Virtually all pupils rise to these expectations by working hard and behaving exceptionally well. Thus, lessons take place without disruption and pupils make good progress.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge well. They are skilled at asking the right question at the right time, to make pupils think more deeply, draw on previous learning and use it to help them move on. This joined-up thinking is a major strength in teaching in this school. Evident in all lessons, it was especially noted in mathematics.
- Teachers check pupils' learning regularly in lessons, adjusting it if necessary to move it on or breaking it down further to tackle misconceptions. All of this makes an important contribution to the good progress pupils are now making in reading (including phonics), writing and mathematics. Each of these is taught well, including through different subjects.
- The excellent attention paid to pupils' personal development means that teaching and support staff are quick to notice changes in behaviour that signal pupils might be struggling, for whatever reason. Where this happens, a good range of strategies, including a nurture group, is used to support the pupils and get them back on track.
- The support offered to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broad, clearly targeted and of good quality. It is planned well and enables the pupils to make good progress. Support staff assist teachers effectively in ensuring that these and other groups of pupils make good progress.
- Classrooms are welcoming and supportive of pupils' learning. Displays show that pupils' work is valued and celebrated, thereby increasing their self-esteem and encouraging reflection. The displays also contain many ideas to which pupils can refer during lessons to help with their learning.
- Assessment is thorough. Pupils' attainment and progress are discussed each half term. The discussions provide an opportunity for teachers to identify and plan more precisely for each pupil's needs, and for leaders to check that these things are happening. This results in teachers planning activities that offer the right level of challenge for the pupils.

- Marking in English, mathematics and in the writing pupils do in different subjects is regular, effective and in line with the school's policy. Pupils are keen to get their teacher's feedback and they respond to it, showing that they have listened and want to get things right. Teachers rarely give pupils such good guidance on how to improve their work and skills in other subjects.
- Despite the many strengths in planning, the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, do not always make the progress of which they are capable. Harder work is available for these pupils, but they do not always get onto it quickly enough. They sometimes mark time listening to what others are expected to do, or they loiter over easier exercises on a worksheet and do not reach the ones that are there to challenge them to think more deeply.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- This aspect is at the very heart of the school. Staff and governors successfully ensure that every pupil in their care can flourish and succeed in a safe, nurturing environment.
- Parents praise the school highly for being caring and reassuring. They say that they are 'extremely impressed with [its] inclusive mentality where no one is left behind', and that their children are 'nurtured and valued as individuals'.
- Staff treat pupils with consideration and respect. Pupils mirror these qualities as they move around the school, holding doors open for each other as well as for adults. They readily smile, say 'hello' and ask if a visitor needs help.
- Pupils are confident and comfortable when speaking to adults. They say that they are very happy at the school and that they very much enjoy learning. They are thoughtful and compassionate young people who learn to care for and respect others.
- Pupils understand that people come from different backgrounds and cultures, follow different faiths and hold different beliefs, but that everyone is equal. When asked what 'tolerance' meant to them, they immediately answered, 'You accept people for what they are.'
- Pupils take great pride in what they do. They present their work well and try hard to do their best. They are happy to talk about their learning and show how well they are doing. For example, one pupil invited an inspector to look how his writing had improved since he started his book.
- Pupils are unanimous in their view that they feel safe in school. They also say that the school keeps them safe and teaches them how to keep themselves safe. They understand the importance of staying safe when using the internet or mobile phones and what to do should they have any concerns. Online safety is given prominence on the school website.
- Pupils praise the recently introduced computer program that enables them to share any concerns they may have, in or out of school, with staff. They are confident that staff will always help them. Staff check the program to see if there are any emerging issues

or patterns that need to be followed up to safeguard the pupils.

- Pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms it can take. They say that incidents are rare and are always dealt with promptly and effectively. They are confident that staff deal quickly with any unkind or negative language, including swearing or calling anyone names.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibility and they do so willingly. School councillors canvas the views of others and, where possible, act on them. They designed the buddy bench and take part in discussions with staff on behalf of other pupils. Monitors carry out a range of duties that help the school to operate smoothly.
- Pupils in Year 6 are good role models for younger pupils. They help in different ways and, as reading buddies, they take their role very seriously. They prepare like teachers for the reading sessions by planning the sessions to take account of the reading levels that the younger pupils have reached. They readily praise the younger pupils for reading accurately and, where appropriate, moving up a level.
- The well-attended breakfast club provides a good start to the day. Pupils enjoy a wide range of enjoyable activities that contribute to their learning, well-being and physical development.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Relationships are excellent. Staff and pupils know each other well. They are friendly and supportive towards each other. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons, around the school and at play and lunchtimes. All of this results in a calm and productive atmosphere where good learning is the order of the day.
- Pupils are successfully encouraged to take pride in their appearance and in their work. They have very positive attitudes and they visibly enjoy learning. They are attentive and eager to participate in lessons, and they work well together, helping each other to clarify their thinking so that they can learn better.
- Pupils are fully aware of how to behave and of the consequences of poor behaviour. They know the steps involved in dealing with any untoward behaviour. They say such behaviour is rare, that staff deal with it promptly and pupils respond quickly. Several pupils have behavioural needs. They are well supported to ensure that their behaviour does not get in the way of their learning and does not distract others.
- Pupils understand the need for rules. They make the connection between school rules and the rule of law, explaining how they allow school and society to function in an orderly way.
- Attendance is average but it has improved and is better than for the same period last year. Persistent absence has fallen, as have the number of exclusions.
- Good attendance and punctuality are rewarded and they have a high profile in the school. Both are meticulously tracked and their links to attainment and progress are documented well. The information is used to impress on parents how important it is to get their children to school regularly and on time. Parents say that staff are approachable, helpful and always available to help them and their children.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Caution is needed when analysing information about pupils' progress and the standards they reach. This is because some groups are very small and because the proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school at different times is higher than in most schools.
- Children start school in the early years with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typical for children of their age. Building on the improved outcomes in the Reception Year, effective teaching is now ensuring that progress is good throughout the school and in a range of subjects.
- In 2016, pupils in Year 6 reached the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. This means that, despite the tests being harder in 2016, they made good progress from when they were in Year 2. There was an upward trend in attainment and progress in Year 6 up to 2015 and it looks set to continue.
- A similar upward trend in standards is evident in Year 2 up to 2015. In 2016, although the proportion of pupils working at the expectation for their age was broadly average, the proportion working at greater depth was low.
- Information examined in school shows that pupils who were with the school from the Nursery through to the end of Year 2 made good progress from low starting points at the end of the Reception Year. The information also shows that those who joined the school at different times made good progress from when they did so.
- The teaching of phonics is consistently strong. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the required standard in the phonics screening check is rising rapidly. Pupils use their phonics skills well to assist their reading.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Well-planned guided reading sessions and encouragement for pupils to read for pleasure, with and without an adult, are helping to sustain improvements in reading. Younger pupils sometimes struggle to understand the meaning behind what they read. Older pupils develop good comprehension skills.
- Writing is benefiting from well-chosen themes that encourage writing in different styles, for different audiences and purposes. Weaknesses in boys' writing are starting to diminish because pupils see that writing has a purpose and is important.
- Handwriting and spelling are improving because of the focused work being done by the school. Nevertheless, some weaknesses remain in the work of older pupils who have not had the benefit of the new approaches throughout their school lives.
- In mathematics, pupils learn to think logically, reason things out, explain how they arrive at their answers, and determine whether they have selected the most efficient method of calculation. They then apply what they have learned in problem-solving activities that deepen their learning and show them the importance of mathematics in everyday life.
- Pupils do much work in science, but have too few opportunities to plan and undertake investigations themselves or to learn to work as young scientists. Pupils acquire a good range of knowledge in history and geography as well as in art and music. They also enjoy physical education and sport and learning to speak Spanish.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because staff identify their needs promptly and put effective support in place.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, also make good progress. However, they do not always get onto the harder work planned for them quickly enough in lessons to help them make the faster progress of which they are capable.
- The money the school receives for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. These pupils, too, make good progress. The difference between the standards they reach and those reached by other pupils nationally is diminishing.

Early years provision

Good

- Good teaching, supported by effective leadership and management, ensures that the children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception Years. Staff are justifiably proud of the award the school received for its work in the early years.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development across all areas of learning has risen consistently in the past three years. It is now close to the national average. Thus, children are prepared well for their work in Year 1.
- Safeguarding is effective and excellent attention is paid to children's health, safety and well-being. Staff are extremely vigilant in caring for the children and making sure they are happy, settled and ready to learn.
- Staff quickly identify children who need additional help, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work closely with parents and external agencies to ensure that children get the support they need.
- A high proportion of the children are from disadvantaged backgrounds. The curriculum is planned well to give these children experiences they may have missed out on earlier so that they get off to a good start and make good progress. A good range of visitors, and visits to places of interest, such as a farm, extend learning for all children.
- The classrooms are well resourced and the environment is vibrant and stimulating, with exciting activities, indoors and out, that foster curiosity and encourage children to find things out for themselves. Good emphasis is placed on developing speech and language, areas that are particularly weak when children start school.
- Staff work together as a team, planning learning and assessing and recording children's progress in a range of ways. They interact well with the children. They are good at developing children's learning without taking over the activity. Skilled questioning in all activities allows children to pursue some of their own interests and to develop independence.
- Children are highly responsive to adults and to each other. They start to develop a good understanding of how to keep safe and to respect each other's differences. Parents value the close partnership they have with the staff that helps them understand how to help their children with their learning.

- Behaviour is excellent. Children share resources well, with few arguments. They help each other by showing other children what to do as they move round different activities.
- Early reading skills are taught well and children soon develop a love of books. There are many opportunities for them to learn how to count, add up and take away. There are fewer opportunities for children to develop writing skills independently. Some children are not yet able to hold pencils correctly as they write or make marks.

School details

Unique reference number	119285
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10019810

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Spavin
Headteacher	Mike Mitchell
Telephone number	01772 422503
Website	www.seven-stars.lancsngfl.ac.uk
Email address	head@seven-stars.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- In the early years, nursery-aged children can attend full or part time. Reception-aged children all attend full time.
- The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above average.
- The school has a breakfast club, which runs from 8am to 8.50am each day in term time.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 27 sessions. The headteacher joined the lead inspector in one of the observations.
- Inspectors examined the school's most recent information about pupils' attainment and progress, sampled the work in the books of pupils currently in the school and of some of those who left last year, to help them reach their judgements.
- Inspectors listened to pupils in Years 1, 2, 5 and 6 read and talked with pupils about their reading habits. They also checked pupils' reading in lessons and visited sessions where guided reading was taking place or pupils were learning phonics.
- Discussions were held with senior and other leaders, four governors and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to large numbers of pupils, in groups and informally at other times. They also took account of the nine responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils, and of the responses to the school's own questionnaire for pupils.
- A range of documents relating to school improvement were examined along with policies and procedures relating to teaching, learning and assessment, safeguarding pupils, and provision for different groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the views of the 13 parents who responded to the online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) or contacted the inspection team by letter. As well, they gained the views of several parents at first hand as they brought their children to school. They also considered the responses to school's own questionnaire for parents, which was completed at a parents evening the day before the inspection took place.
- Account was also taken of the 12 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lorna Rushton

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2016