

Aspull Church Primary School

Bolton Road, Aspull, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 1QW

Inspection dates

1–2 March 2017

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has ensured that the school's vision for 'Excellence in caring, sharing and learning' has developed since the previous inspection. Leaders and governors are ambitious in their expectations for pupils, staff and the school community
- Governors provide effective support to senior leaders. They know the school and monitor its work carefully.
- The leadership team have maintained the good quality of education at the school since the last inspection. Leaders monitor teaching but checks are not always rigorous enough to ensure advice is followed.
- Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is tracked frequently to ensure no pupil falls behind. Almost all the pupils make good progress and are working at or above age-related expectations.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. However, in the early years and key stage 1, teaching does not consistently challenge some of the most able pupils to enable them to make the progress they are capable of. Pupils have good literacy skills but the presentation of their work is more variable.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Their learning needs are accurately assessed and appropriate support helps them to learn well.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is good. Strategies are well devised to support their learning and personal development.
- Pupils enjoy a rich and broad curriculum. An extensive range of enrichment activities excites pupils and raises their aspirations to learn.
- Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and the understanding of British values are extensive. The respect and tolerance displayed by pupils is a strength.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are excellent. Pupils are polite and courteous to staff, visitors and each other. They display great enthusiasm for learning. Pupils are proud to belong to their school and they appreciate its close and caring community.
- Pupils' safety is paramount. Systems in place are rigorous and regularly checked to keep pupils as safe as possible.
- Outcomes for pupils in Year 1, in phonics screening checks, are above the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by ensuring that advice to teachers is acted on and best practice is shared across the school.
- Ensure that teachers provide enough challenge for the most able pupils in the early years and in key stage 1 so that more pupils are working at the high standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the consistency of presentation across the school so that all pupils produce work of the highest standard.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders are guided by a deep moral purpose which pervades the school. They have ensured that the values of the school are well understood by staff, pupils and parents. Pupils always come first in this school.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher and governors, has successfully moved the school forward on several fronts since the previous inspection. Her commitment, vision and ambition for her pupils have created a very positive learning culture within the school. Parents, pupils and staff speak very highly of her leadership which is ambitious not only for pupils and staff, but for the school community.
- All leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The plan to improve the school is well focused and ensures that key issues are tackled effectively. Senior leaders have correctly identified the improvements required in teaching to ensure that the most able pupils are always challenged enough to attain the high standard, particularly in the early years and in key stage 1. Actions are clearly outlined in their plan.
- Leaders are passionate about the subjects they lead. They monitor and evaluate standards and support staff development. They regularly report to senior leaders and governors. However, checks are not always made to assess whether the support and advice given has been acted on, leading to missed opportunities to share best practice and ensure that good teaching moves rapidly to outstanding teaching.
- The management of teaching performance is effective. Professional development, including the use of coaching and mentoring, is closely linked to school priorities and supports teachers to improve their knowledge and skills.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. A strong moral code underpins the school's values and these are regularly explored during collective worship. This was exemplified during the inspection when the vicar helped the pupils to understand Lent as a time for 'giving up' and for 'taking up and finding ways to help others'. Pupils' learning is enhanced through extra-curricular activities. They participate in a wide range of additional trips and enrichment activities which they enjoy. Music is a strength of the school; the singing observed during collective worship was very moving. British values are given importance and woven into all subjects. The curriculum successfully supports pupils' progress and personal development.
- Senior leaders have created a school environment in which pupils from different backgrounds are included well. The pupils show tolerance and respect in their day-to-day work. As a result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses pupil premium funding effectively. It is used to assist both the learning and personal development of disadvantaged pupils. The school has a good understanding of the barriers to learning faced by individual pupils and plans effective strategies to support them. Current information on pupils' outcomes indicates that these pupils make good progress and that the differences between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are diminishing.

- The leader of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has a good knowledge of the needs of the pupils across the school and ensures that funding for these pupils is spent wisely. She liaises effectively with parents, pupils, teachers and external agencies to ensure support that programmes meet the needs of all pupils. As a result of the high-quality provision they receive, they make good progress in line with their peers.
- Additional sport premium funding is used effectively to increase pupils' participation in sport and develop healthy lifestyles. Specialist coaches work alongside school staff and the vast majority of pupils take part in extra-curricular sporting activities. The school is rightly proud of its successes in local competitive sports.
- Parents are warmly greeted at the start of the day. The school values parental involvement and they in turn value the opportunity to play an active role in the life of the school. Parents are invited to attend weekly celebration assemblies and school worship. Workshops on topics such as e-safety help them assist their children's well-being and learning. Parents are very positive about the school. One parents' comment echoed those of many others: 'This is an amazing school with fabulous caring teaching staff.' The overwhelming majority of parents would recommend this school to others.

Governance of the school

- Governors have helped to create the strong ethos and vision for the school and its community. They have high expectations for the school's continued success and are passionate about its ongoing improvement.
- Governors provide effective challenge and support to senior leaders. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They receive detailed information and ask challenging questions about pupils' progress and achievement, ensuring that the school continues to improve. As well as providing appropriate challenge to leaders, governors provide good care and support for the staff, pupils and families of the school. They help to make the school a caring, happy community.
- Governors are active and effective in their roles. Link governors meet regularly with school leaders to gain first-hand information on progress against school priorities. The link governor for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities checks that this funding has been well spent. Other link governors also ensure that the pupil premium and the sport premium funding make a positive difference to pupils.
- Governors take pupils' safety very seriously and ensure that the school's provision meets requirements. They are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and ensure they keep up to date with current guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and governors are resolute in providing a safe environment for all. The strong culture of safeguarding is evident in all aspects of school life. The school site is well maintained and secure. The checks made on staff who work at the school meet requirements. All relevant documentation is in place. All staff receive regular training in all aspects of safeguarding – they are clear on what to do if they have a concern about a child.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have incisive knowledge of individual pupils who are vulnerable or in need. They work closely with families and external agencies to ensure that effective help and support is provided.
- Pupils receive information in lessons and through other activities on how to keep safe. There are lessons, for example, on the dangers of drug misuse and e-safety. The school works closely with parents to ensure their children are safe. Safety information is provided on the school website. Parents' views clearly indicate that the school looks after the safety of their children extremely well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is good across the school; it is strongest in upper key stage 2. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very strong. For example, in upper key stage 2, teachers encourage pupils to try hard; they recognise their efforts and ensure they celebrate their successes. Pupils respond well to this and strive to reach the high expectations set by their teachers.
- Teachers plan lessons that are informed appropriately by checking what pupils have previously learned and what they understand. They clearly communicate their expectations of what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they have to do to be successful in their work and pupils value the guidance offered to them. However, this support is not consistent and, at times, does not provide sufficient guidance for pupils to know how to improve their work.
- The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. In Reception and Year 1, the teaching of phonics is matched closely to pupils' abilities. Pupils understand the correct terminology because adults have secure subject knowledge. Teachers encourage a love of reading. In key stage 1, pupils read with expression and fluency and speak enthusiastically about reading. Teachers provide a wide range of texts in key stage 2. Pupils discuss their preferred authors and the types of books they enjoy reading with great confidence.
- The teaching of writing has improved. Leaders recognised that there were not enough opportunities for the most able pupils to practise and improve longer pieces of writing. The school has taken action through the introduction of writing sessions which allow pupils to write for a sustained period of time.
- A scrutiny of pupils' books shows that teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their writing across a wide range of subjects. Examples of writing in history about 'Working Victorian Children' and a Passover poem in religious education, demonstrated the most able pupils writing to a high standard. Year 6 books demonstrate the success of teachers' focus on developing pupils' writing skills.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and used effectively to ask probing questions. When misconceptions are identified, teachers act to ensure they are corrected. This is often effective, but at times, when tasks are not challenging enough in the early years and key stage 1, especially for the most able pupils, pupils make less progress.
- The presentation of pupils' work is not consistent across the school. The school has introduced a set of guidelines for the presentation of pupils' work. However, there are missed opportunities during lessons for teachers to reinforce these guidelines and

expectations are not consistently high enough to ensure that all pupils produce work of the highest standard.

- Teaching assistants are effective. They receive high-quality training to develop their skills and as a result they provide good support for learning. Support and guidance are varied to meet the needs of learners of all abilities. For example, they encourage and support the learning of lower-ability pupils by breaking down activities into small, manageable steps and reminding pupils of the main teaching points.
- Teachers manage behaviour for learning effectively. As a result, pupils participate well and lessons run smoothly. They work well together and enjoy learning with their peers. This helps them to develop their language skills and articulate their ideas.
- Art is taught well. Pupils are developing a range of skills, they enjoy their work and have produced some pieces of a high standard.
- Teachers use homework well, often linking it to individual lessons or topics. Pupils say they enjoy the homework they are given because it helps them become independent learners.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- In this nurturing school community the school motto of 'Excellence in caring, sharing and learning' is evident in all aspects of school life. This is a school where the care of every pupil is paramount – indeed, every child matters.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They say that bullying is rare. Pupils understand bullying in its different forms and know how to deal with it if it happens. They show an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe because they are taught about topics such as road safety, water safety, fire safety and how to keep safe online.
- Pupils are confident learners with excellent attitudes to learning. They are very enthusiastic and enjoy talking about their work; they listen attentively to teachers, work cooperatively with their peers and persevere when work challenges them. They are proud of their achievements and of their school.
- Pupils are respectful and tolerant of each other and each other's opinions. They have an excellent awareness of communities beyond their own. For example, through a link with a school in Gambia, pupils gain an appreciation of inequality. They understand that there are many religions and cultures in modern British society and that everyone deserves respect. One pupil echoed the attitude of others in saying: 'We are all unique, everyone can have their own opinion.' Pupils are also encouraged to think about 'big issues'. Information stations in each class enable them to find out about national and world events. One pupil spoke strongly about how recent legislation in one country was unfair towards certain groups of people.
- Pupils relish the roles of responsibility that they are invited to take on. These include being play leaders, members of the pupil parliament and Change4life Champions. Pupils enjoy looking after younger children in the school; for example the School Sport

Organiser Crew coordinate play activities for the younger children.

- Pupils learn to look out for the needs of others and develop a spirit of charity and social justice. They develop enterprise skills through fund-raising for a variety of good causes such as Save the Children, local food banks and The Royal British Legion.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils display a thirst for learning. They value their education and understand its importance, resulting in classrooms that are calm and purposeful.
- Pupils think that behaviour is outstanding and they encourage others to conduct themselves well. Each half term they nominate one of their peers, whose behaviour reflects the school's values, for a 'Caring, Sharing and Learning Award'.
- From the early years and throughout the school, pupils cooperate and support each other. A whole-school assembly led by the vicar exemplified this; pupils entered the hall calmly, they sang beautifully and eagerly answered questions, taking time for quiet reflection at the end.
- Attendance is above the national average. Pupils look forward to school, they are punctual and ready to learn. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils and families understand and value regular attendance. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils appeared to be below that of other groups in 2016 but has now improved.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress from their starting points across a range of subjects. In upper key stage 2 pupils make rapid progress as a result of very strong teaching.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 1 was above the national average in 2016. The proportion reaching greater depth was in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was also above the national average in 2016. The proportion of pupils reaching the high standard was above the national average for reading and mathematics and in line with the national average for writing. Current attainment is strong and indicates that a greater proportion of pupils are on track to meet the high standard at the end of the year in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in reading. The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 was above the national figure. These skills are built on as pupils move through the school. Pupils love to read. They read widely with fluency, understanding and confidence.
- Pupils are typically making good progress in mathematics. Many pupils are confident using their number skills to solve problems. However, rates of progress vary between year groups. They are strongest in upper key stage 2.
- Progress in writing is good. Pupils understand how to write in different styles and use good vocabulary in stories. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in

grammar, punctuation and spelling was above the national average in 2016. However, handwriting and presentation are not of a consistently high standard.

- The school tracks pupils' progress well. By the time they leave, most pupils have made good progress – often linked to the more challenging teaching in key stage 2. Leaders have recognised that this progress is variable in other years and writing is not as strong as reading and mathematics. Plans are in place to provide more challenge and support, especially in key stage 1. In 2016, none of the boys in key stage 2 reached the high standard in writing. As a result of leaders' actions, current pupils' work shows that in the Year 6 class, a number of boys are now on track to attain the high standard in writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress this year in reading, writing and mathematics. Their progress and attainment are well supported through the effective use of pupil premium funding.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent academic and pastoral support. Funding is used effectively to support these pupils. Consequently, they make good progress and achieve well, both academically and personally.
- Pupils' work in other areas of the curriculum shows that they are making at least good progress. Work in the humanities, science, music and art demonstrates that pupils are developing skills and knowledge in these subjects. As a result they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Children are assessed on entry to Reception and their learning needs quickly identified. From starting points that are typical for their age, there is clear improvement over time. Children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1. However, the provision does not always challenge the most able children to make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Teaching is good. Adults use discussion and questioning to develop children's thinking and engagement in learning. As a result, children develop concentration and the ability to speak clearly and articulate their ideas. In one lesson, children were working with their teacher making symmetrical pictures using elastic bands on peg boards. Children explained what 'symmetrical' meant and discussed why one of the pictures was not symmetrical.
- A rich and well-organised indoor learning environment helps children to learn. They engage eagerly with the activities because the resources are appealing and are linked to the class themes of Jack and the Beanstalk, planting and food. As a result, children develop curiosity, independence, confidence and the ability to express their thoughts and ideas to each other.
- The outdoor environment, although used regularly, is not as exciting as the indoor environment. As a result, fewer children opt to learn in the outside area and opportunities to enhance learning and development, particularly for the boys, are missed. Leaders have recognised this and action is imminent to develop the outdoor learning environment.

- Phonics is taught well. Children use their knowledge of letters and sounds to write words and simple sentences. Children are supported well to form letters in cursive script. Writing is encouraged through the provision of writing materials around the classroom, although children are less confident to opt to write unaided.
- Children's behaviour is excellent. They understand rules and routines and respond quickly to direction. They support each other with sensitivity in a calm and respectful manner. Children thrive in the early years as a result of the caring relationships they have with adults. Staff work hard to support children's development of personal, social and emotional skills and their progress in these areas is strong.
- Parents are seen as important partners in their child's learning and given opportunities to engage with their child's learning. Parents are highly positive about their child's time in the early years.
- High-quality focused support for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities helps them to make good progress. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged children.
- All safeguarding and welfare arrangements are met. Staff keep children safe and well cared for. Like the staff throughout the school, they are vigilant in safeguarding and make swift referrals to the headteacher if they have any concerns. Parents who spoke with inspectors and responded to the online survey were overwhelmingly positive about their children's experience in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	106518
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10024328

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Lewis
Headteacher	Jenny Clarke
Telephone number	01942 746679
Website	www.aspullchurch.wigan.sch.uk/
Email address	enquiries@admin.aspullchurch.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30–31 May 2012

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school currently meets the government's floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some observations were undertaken with the headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils, listened to them read and reviewed some of their work.
- Discussions were held with: the headteacher and deputy headteacher, teachers with subject responsibilities, five governors including the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Thirty-six free text responses made by parents were considered. Inspectors also considered 16 responses made by staff to Ofsted's survey and 16 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Aleksandra Hartshorne, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Mavis Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Harrold	Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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