

Chorley, the Parish of St Laurence Church of England Primary School

Highfield Road South, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 1RB

Inspection dates

7 June and 27–28 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is not good enough and achievement has dipped since the last inspection. This is because there have been insufficient permanent staff in school.
- The most able and middle-ability pupils are not making the gains in achievement that they are capable of in English and mathematics, particularly at higher levels.
- Assessment information is not always used precisely enough by teachers in lessons to provide tasks that meet pupils' needs and move them on in their learning promptly.
- Teachers are not providing enough opportunities to extend and challenge pupils to think more deeply about their work.
- There are not enough chances for pupils to apply their learning and develop their skills.
- Opportunities are missed to get the most out of pupils learning from each other and from their mistakes.
- Some parents feel that they could be better informed about school matters.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has worked tirelessly to deal with the staffing issues, and keep the focus on pupils and improving the school. She is well respected by staff and is successfully addressing the weaknesses in teaching and the dip in achievement.
- The headteacher is well supported by an enthusiastic leadership team and a committed governing body and staff.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel very safe. They are well looked after and safeguarding procedures are rigorous.
- Pupils behave well. They show care and kindness toward each other.
- Good early years provision ensures that children make a positive start to life in school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise achievement in English and mathematics, ensuring that pupils, particularly those that are of middle ability and the most able, achieve the higher levels of which they are capable. Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers:
 - provide more opportunities to extend and challenge pupils to think more deeply about their work
 - offer pupils chances to apply their learning and develop their skills
 - use assessment in lessons more precisely to pinpoint learning needs and move pupils on in their learning promptly
 - capitalise on opportunities for pupils to learn from each other and from their mistakes.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that, as a matter of urgency, a permanent team of teaching staff is in place so that good-quality teaching and learning practice can be established and sustained, and leadership roles, such as for special educational needs, can be further developed
 - developing communication strategies with parents further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher has shown strong leadership in the face of complex staffing issues. Her resilience and unstinting focus on always wanting the best for the pupils at St Laurence has won the respect and backing of the very large majority of staff.
- Together with senior leaders, the headteacher's hard work and enthusiasm have ensured that the disruption caused by having a large number of temporary staff has been kept to the minimum. Consequently, pupils are happy, enjoy school and are offered many opportunities to develop as well-rounded individuals.
- The school's current leadership team is successfully addressing the weaknesses in teaching and dip in achievement at higher levels. New appointments of permanent teaching staff have been made and they will start at the beginning of the new academic year. However, there will still not be a full complement of permanent teaching staff in September 2017. Leaders are well aware that until a permanent team is established the good-quality improvements that have been put in place lack sustainability and cannot be fully embedded.
- Despite the temporary nature of some of the teaching staff in school, staff are committed to working together to develop the school and are motivated to make sure that there is as much improvement as possible. Relationships between staff are positive; they are proud to work at St Laurence.
- The school's Christian values are an important part of all that the school does. Pupils and staff talk often about attributes such as 'love' and 'respect'. These qualities were much in evidence during the inspection through the ways pupils put others before themselves. Pupils are caring, considerate and respectful of each other and the wider community.
- Senior leaders know their school well. The strengths of the school and areas for improvement are clearly identified in their self-evaluation and development plans, which are accurate, honest and reflective. Checks on the quality of teaching and learning are regular, focused and have contributed to the improvements made in teaching to date. Leaders are aware that some staff are less confident than others at delivering the level of challenge required within the new curriculum. They have worked hard to address this issue and provided good-quality professional development and support to increase teachers' skills and confidence.
- Pupil premium funding is used to reduce barriers to learning that may be experienced by disadvantaged pupils, including the most able. This has enabled disadvantaged pupils to be successful and be part of everything the school has to offer. The progress of pupils supported by this funding is monitored well. The impact of the funding is evaluated regularly by the headteacher and the governing body.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sport funding is also used well. Pupils benefit from good-quality specialist sports coaching and an increased number of sport-related clubs. Pupils say how much they enjoy sport, particularly the opportunities that they have to be part of local events and competitions. Pupils recognise the value of physical activity as a part of being healthy.

- Senior leaders have developed a clear, straightforward system to assess pupils and to check frequently on their progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This information is reviewed regularly by leaders and governors. It is also used to discuss pupils' learning with teachers and to plan opportunities to help pupils catch up if needed. However, assessment information is used less effectively by teachers to pinpoint precisely the learning needs of pupils in lessons and move them on quickly in their learning.
- The leadership and organisation of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are appropriate but not as strong as they could be. This is because there has been no permanent special educational needs coordinator in place over the last year. Nonetheless, identification of need is appropriately made and resources are of a good standard; funding is used effectively. Staff have a good understanding of these pupils' learning and welfare needs. The majority of pupils succeed in their learning and their personal and social development. There are systems and procedures in place to check regularly on the progress of individual pupils.
- The school offers a broad curriculum that engages pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. Science, religious education, physical education and music are the strongest elements. Evidence of this can be seen in the work that is displayed in the classrooms and corridors around school.
- Pupils appreciate the opportunities that they have to gain a range of experiences, including through visitors in school, trips to museums and localities. For example, a group of pupils were thrilled to meet, in person, the astronaut Tim Peake, as part of a space and science project.
- Well-promoted spiritual, moral and social and cultural development means that the school is a calm and considerate environment where pupils mix together happily. Pupils learn about the local community through assemblies and the curriculum, raise funds for charities and learn about tolerance, respect for differences and the rule of law. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being members of the school council, lunchtime monitors or eco warriors.
- The staff of St Laurence work closely with other schools. They support each other, for example by developing checks regarding assessment. The school also benefits from a very positive relationship with the local authority school improvement team, who are supporting the school in addressing their present improvement needs.
- The large majority of parents who spoke to the inspectors, or responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, felt very positive about the school. However, a small number perceived that communication could be better. Some said that requests and information about events were not always given in good time for them to be able to act upon them. Some felt that they did not fully understand some of the changes to routines in the school or the instability in staffing.

Governance of the school

- The governance of the school is effective.
- Governors share the vision and commitment to improvement held by leaders and staff. To this end, they are determined that the temporary staffing situation is resolved as

soon as possible.

- Governors know their school well because of the quality of the information that they receive from the headteacher. Governors are confident to ask challenging questions and are involved in aspects of the school's development, and monitoring of improvement. To enhance this further, governors have recently set up a committee to specifically monitor improvement and progress. The skills of the governing body have been utilised well to ensure that their expertise benefits the school.
- Governors have a secure understanding of performance management procedures. They ensure that the management of teachers' pay is effective. They hold teachers and leaders soundly to account.
- Governors have an appropriate level of understanding about the progress that pupils are making and they have challenged the school to improve. They make sure that the pupil premium and the PE and sports grants are spent effectively and make a difference to pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have a safe and secure environment by promoting the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Safeguarding arrangements and security checks on staff are in place, and records are appropriate and kept securely. Staff and governors undertake regular and appropriate training, including that related to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism.
- The care and welfare of pupils is effective. There are appropriate relationships with other agencies in cases where vulnerable pupils or families need additional support.
- Governors have ensured that the appropriate monitoring and filtering arrangements are in place for the school's internet connection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. Teachers are committed and work hard but because of the high turnover and temporary nature of most teaching staff, pupils make inconsistent progress. This is particularly evident for middle- and higher-ability pupils, who are not achieving all that they are capable of.
- The leadership team has been persistent in training and developing teaching and learning skills and strategies, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers have been willing and receptive. Improvements are beginning to show but they are not yet fully embedded.
- Expectations regarding what pupils can achieve are often too low, especially for those pupils who are most able and those of middle ability. As a result, few of the middle-ability pupils are making more than expected progress for their age or reaching higher standards and only a small number of most-able pupils are reaching these higher standards.

- Teachers do not always do enough to check whether pupils are being sufficiently challenged. Challenging tasks are offered but only when other work has been completed. Consequently, pupils miss out on being stretched further or extended early enough in their learning.
- Teachers' systems for assessing progress on a day-to-day basis have improved but are not yet used precisely enough to pick up who needs further challenge within a lesson. As a result, teachers do not always provide work that meets pupils' needs, nor do they move them on in their learning quickly enough.
- In too many lessons, pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to apply their learning and independently try out some of the skills and knowledge that they have. Likewise, insufficient opportunities are given to pupils to think more deeply about their work.
- Teachers regularly draw pupils together in lessons to share learning. However, the feedback offered to pupils at this time frequently lacks purpose. Consequently, this does not help pupils to learn from their mistakes or move on in their learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure across the school and teachers use well-chosen resources to design lessons that capture pupils' interest.
- Relationships between staff and pupils in the school are good. There is a calm, purposeful atmosphere in classrooms which creates a positive climate for learning. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and are motivated and eager to learn. For example, in one lesson where pupils were asked to describe and write about a character that they had created, pupils were visibly disappointed when the lesson ended.
- Pupils particularly enjoy and are excited by curriculum subjects such as science, history and geography. For example, pupils were enthralled in a science lesson, where electronic tablets were used to find out about healthy foods. Pupils were absorbed in finding out about how food packaging could tell you how healthy products were.
- Pupils can articulate what they are learning and are happy to explain what they are doing. They are aware of the goals that they have been set in learning and know what they have to do to achieve them. Pupils will often help each other if they think a peer does not quite understand an instruction or concept.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. Pupils benefit enormously from having phonics taught as soon as they start school and by the time that they leave key stage 1 the vast majority are able to read well.
- Where pupils particularly struggle with their learning, this is identified well and an effective range of learning opportunities helps them to catch up. For example, pupils who struggle with reading have good support to practise their skills and are proud of the progress that they make.
- For those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the support they are offered is broad, targeted and of an appropriate quality. Additional support is planned well, resulting in the majority of such pupils making good progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the progress of these pupils.
- The very large majority of parents who responded to Parent View or spoke to inspectors in the playground are satisfied with the quality of education provided and

the progress that their children make.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff and governors work hard to ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils in their care can thrive and succeed. As a result, pupils are friendly, thoughtful and caring citizens.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are woven into the curriculum and through the school's Christian values such as 'kindness' and 'respect'. These can be seen in the daily life of the school, for example, in the way pupils speak to each other and welcome those new to the school. As one boy said, 'We make friends quickly.' These values are also evident through small acts of kindness, such as an older pupil offering to help a younger one by holding her dinner tray while the younger child sat down at the table.
- The very large majority of parents who spoke to inspectors, and those who responded to Parent View, felt positive about the school and the work of the staff. Most parents felt that their children were happy, safe and well looked after.
- Pupils told inspectors how proud they were of their school. They pride themselves at how good they are at sports, often winning competitions and trophies. Pupils were quick to add that they are good winners, but 'we are good losers too, because that is just as important'. Many pupils, of all ages, have responsibilities around school, including as members of the school council, librarians or playground 'buddies'. The eco team were keen to say that they regularly go around school making sure that lights are not left on and taps are turned off properly.
- Pupils were unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school. They talked about assemblies and lessons where they had been taught how to keep themselves safe, both personally and online. Pupils could also share with inspectors examples of how the school taught them about being healthy. For example, they talked knowledgeably about how to have a healthy lifestyle, including not eating too much sugar and exercising regularly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around school and in the dining room is orderly and responsible. In the playground they play well together and enjoy a range of games and sports, which they play sensibly and with a mature awareness of others around them. Pupils are polite and well mannered, often holding the door open and greeting adults and visitors with a smile and a 'hello'. Staff and pupils have good relationships and are friendly, supportive and encouraging. As a result, school is a calm and orderly place.
- A purposeful atmosphere in classrooms means that pupils have very positive attitudes

and enjoy their learning. Very occasionally when activities have lost their impetus in a small number of lessons, pupils' attention wanes. However, the vast majority are attentive and very eager to participate in lessons. For example, in a history lesson in Year 3, pupils were vocal, animated and passionate in trying to share their reasons for and against Claudius invading Britain. When the role-play part of the lesson finished and they were asked to settle, they did so quickly and calmly, showing an impressive degree of restraint and self-discipline.

- Pupils consider behaving well to be important and are praised regularly for their good conduct. As a result, they are fully aware of how to behave and the consequences of poor behaviour. They say that incidents of inappropriate behaviour do happen but are rare, dealt with quickly by teachers, and responded to sensibly by pupils.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Good attendance is rewarded and the systems for checking absence are rigorous and applied regularly. Absence is monitored closely. Leaders are aware that there are small pockets of persistent absence among some pupils in school that still need addressing. However, those responsible for tackling absence have worked hard with this group of pupils, with some notable success.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because too few pupils achieve at higher levels in English and mathematics at the end of both key stages 1 and 2.
- The progress of middle-ability pupils is not good enough. At both key stages, these pupils do not achieve highly enough in any subject. For example, in 2016 none of the large number of middle-ability pupils achieved at greater depth or higher standards.
- Historically, pupils have achieved extremely well at higher levels, often well above national averages. However, teachers have not adapted sufficiently to the increased demands of the new curriculum and there have been too many unavoidable but damaging in-year changes to staffing. Teachers are not using assessment well enough to provide pupils with sufficient challenge.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing, mathematics, and grammar, punctuation and spelling was above national averages and in reading it was comparable. However, in-year checks on progress across the school and in pupils' books suggest that pupils will struggle to be above national averages in 2017.
- Some of the most able pupils at the end of key stage 2 did achieve higher standards in English and mathematics in 2016 and as a result attainment was comparable to national averages, except in writing. However, none of the large number of middle-ability pupils achieved at these higher standards. Additionally, in-year checks on progress and scrutiny of pupils' books indicate a dip in progress and attainment at these higher standards across key stage 2. At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, school assessments indicate that pupils are likely to be below what would be expected nationally for pupils of a similar age.
- Achievement at the end of key stage 1 was high at the expected standard in 2016,

with an above-average proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in each subject, a below-average proportion of pupils achieved a higher than average standard.

- There is only a small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school but pupil premium funding is used well to remove barriers for these pupils and give them access to all aspects of the curriculum. Similar to all pupils, disadvantaged pupils make good progress at the expected standard but do not make the progress that they are capable of at the higher standard.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics at the end of Year 1 has been consistently well above the national average for the last three years. There is strong evidence to suggest that this will continue, with a very high proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in 2017.
- The majority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. The support offered by teachers and teaching assistants is effective and ensures that pupils succeed in their learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children start school with skills and knowledge typical for their age. The good-quality provision offered and the expectation that all children can achieve a good level of development ensures that they make good progress from their starting points. Consequently, by the end of the Reception Year, children achieve well above those of a similar age nationally.
- Provision is particularly strong in developing literacy skills. The constant and good-quality focus on phonics and writing has a noticeable effect on learning. As a result, by the end of Reception most children can write a sentence in neat, legible handwriting. Often these sentences contain adjectives and are punctuated with capital letters and full stops. For example, one child wrote very clearly, phonetically, 'The stinky fox was mean because he ate the gingerbread man.'
- Most provision is organised to provide children with a stimulating range of activities. These are often based on a class theme, most recently traditional tales. Children are also encouraged to contribute by offering ideas and suggestions of their own for what activities they could do. Adults are actively involved in the children's learning and play. Activities engage children and encourage them to explore. For example, one child observed by the inspector spent a long time in the water play, investigating which material could be used for a roof to keep the rain off the 'house' belonging to the 'three little pigs'. She was visibly delighted when she worked out the answer.
- Provision in some areas is less developed, particularly, but not exclusively, outdoors, where there are not as many activities to encourage children to practise and apply the skills that they have learnt independently. Indoors, opportunities for pupils to role play are sometimes missed and writing activities can dominate areas. However, leaders are well aware of the need to improve some aspects of provision and are working successfully with the local authority to develop these areas.
- The early years is led by an experienced practitioner. Leaders know the strengths and

where the provision could be improved. To this end, the early years leader has been working successfully with the local authority school improvement team to fine tune aspects of indoor provision and to develop outdoor provision.

- Safeguarding is effective and risk assessments for activities and events are thorough.
- The number of disadvantaged children in the early years is small. However, additional funding is used well to provide resources and support for these children. Leaders have a good understanding of the impact that this has on children's learning and have taken steps to ensure that children achieve well. As a result, given their starting points, disadvantaged children make similarly good progress to that made by other children.
- The quality of teaching is good. Adults demonstrate good subject knowledge and staff have a consistency of approach and manner. Routines are well established and children's behaviour is good. Adults are quick to provide support to children to help them understand the importance of being polite and treating one another with respect. Children play together well and are motivated to learn.
- The importance placed on reading and mathematical skills is evident, with regular chances for children to practise their letters and sounds, and use numbers. The development of language and speaking is also a high priority, along with building self-confidence. Adults engage with children well and ask questions to draw out children's understanding and encourage them to talk. As a result, children are self-assured and articulate when talking to each other and to adults.
- The assessment information that adults gather on a day-to-day basis is used effectively to plan a curriculum that is both interesting and relevant. Teachers' assessment and the tracking of children's learning are of a good quality. Children that struggle with their learning are picked up quickly to make sure that they are given the support they need.
- The strong emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment is evident from the very positive relationships adults have with children, and children have with each other. Staff consider good relationships with parents as being extremely important. They take the time to regularly communicate with parents and encourage them to be part of their children's learning. Parents describe the adults in early years as 'wonderful' and say that being in Reception is a 'welcoming and positive experience' for their child and for them.
- Adults work hard to ensure that transition is smooth for new children joining the school. For example, they run a successful monthly pre-school session called 'little explorers' to introduce young children to staff, activities and school life. Adults also link with local pre-school provision and visit the homes of prospective new children to ease the transition to the Reception class.

School details

Unique reference number	119465
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10032333

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Pemberton
Headteacher	Emma Marquis
Telephone number	01257 262 940
Website	www.st-laurence.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@st-laurence.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2013

Information about this school

- This school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets 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 observed learning in all classes. They observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Inspectors also observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtimes.
- Inspectors looked at the work in pupils' books and in the 'learning journeys' of children in the early years.
- An inspector listened to a number of pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the temporary special educational needs coordinator, the person responsible for safeguarding and attendance, the early years leader and a leader for teaching and learning.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair. A meeting was also held with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with an inspector, and inspectors also spoke informally with pupils in the playground and around school.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- They also took account of the 72 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors talked briefly with a number of parents before school and took into consideration letters handed to inspectors at the time of the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: minutes from meetings of the governing body; information on pupils' attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance and its development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gary Bevin	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Morley, lead inspector	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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