

Arkholme Church of England Primary School

Arkholme, Carnforth, Lancashire LA6 1AU

Inspection dates

29–30 January 2019

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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have planned a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum. It is enriched by a wide range of trips and visits which develop pupils' learning, confidence and knowledge of diversity well.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy lessons and attend very regularly.
- Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Pupils learn to treat others with kindness and respect. They are keen to help others within school and the wider community.
- Leaders and governors work closely to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors provide a good balance of challenge and support for leaders.
- Whole-school improvement plans lack specific criteria by which leaders, including governors, can measure success.
- Pupils develop their knowledge well across a range of subjects. Staff plan interesting lessons.
- Teachers ensure that pupils read a wide range of challenging texts. Pupils read very regularly. They enjoy reading and read with confidence and for pleasure.
- In key stage 1, pupils' reading books are sometimes too difficult. This slows the progress that they make in phonics.
- Pupils learn to write for a range of different purposes. They use grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately. However, in key stage 2 pupils' handwriting is sometimes untidy.
- In mathematics, pupils develop confidence and accuracy in their written calculations. However, they have limited opportunities to apply their skills to reasoning and problem-solving activities.
- Pupils achieve well in physical education (PE). They take part in a wide range of activities and sport.
- Pupils develop a love of singing. They sing with confidence.
- Children develop their curiosity and creativity in the early years. The engaging learning environment encourages them to play and explore.
- In the early years, the activities that staff plan for children in mathematics sometimes lack challenge.
- Leaders in the early years are developing the accuracy and precision of their systems to check children's progress in learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - sharpening improvement planning so that it enables leaders and governors to check accurately whether improvements are on track across the course of the year.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning in order to increase pupils' achievements, by:
 - in mathematics, giving pupils more frequent opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills
 - embedding the teaching of letter formation so that pupils in key stage 2 develop a consistent handwriting style.
- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening, by:
 - ensuring that pupils' reading books are closely matched to their reading ability.
- Improve children's outcomes in the early years, by:
 - planning frequent, high-quality activities that challenge children in mathematics
 - continuing to develop the accuracy of checks that leaders make on children's learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have established a welcoming and nurturing environment where pupils are encouraged to develop a love of learning. The school is at the heart of the village community. Staff, governors, parents and the local church work harmoniously together to provide pupils with a range of opportunities to develop as successful learners and caring and kind citizens.
- Through regular assemblies and prayer, staff encourage pupils to be reflective and thoughtful. Pupils write their own prayers about the school values. Leaders ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to live out their Christian values. For example, the school's RotaKids group organised a whole-school elf run fundraiser to raise money for a local hospice.
- The headteacher leads a reflective staff who evaluate their teaching and are aspirational to improve further in areas including phonics and mathematics. Teachers work with each other and with other schools to share good practice and develop their skills. This has improved pupils' outcomes, including in reading and writing by the end of key stage 2. Governors and leaders ensure that training matches the school's development priorities. They have taken steps to improve pupils' progress further in mathematics in key stage 2.
- Leaders have put in place a detailed system to check the progress that all pupils make in their learning, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff regularly check the effectiveness of teaching and plan further support for any pupils falling behind. Regular meetings with parents, carers and, when needed, other agencies and professionals are used well to share information about pupils' learning.
- Middle leaders make regular checks on pupils' learning across the curriculum. For example, in history, leaders check that pupils are making progress and that enough time is planned in the school's timetable to teach history regularly and thoroughly. Pupils' workbooks show that leaders have planned a broad and balanced curriculum across the school.
- The curriculum is engaging and develops pupils' skills and knowledge across a range of subjects. Frequent interesting trips and visits enrich the curriculum and develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders ensure that staff make full use of the local area to support learning: for example, pupils in key stage 2 visit a local river as part of their geography work. Residential outdoor and adventurous trips build pupils' confidence and resilience. Trips to London and Liverpool give pupils a range of experiences that contrast with their small, rural community.
- Leaders have established close partnerships with parents. Parents feel very welcome. They appreciate that staff are ready to listen to any concerns they have and to address these quickly. Parents are fully involved in their children's learning, attending meetings, assemblies and events on a very regular basis. This means that parents can support their children's learning in areas such as reading. Leaders greatly appreciate the very active parent-teacher association, which provides a wide range of equipment and resources to enhance pupils' learning.

- Leaders use the sport premium to improve pupils' skills, knowledge, health and well-being. Pupils take part in a wide range of activities, including very regular competitions with other schools. Leaders develop pupils' love of sport and exercise and encourage them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. For example, pupils regularly run the Arkholme mile. Leaders ensure that pupils leave the school with a good range of skills in PE and that they can swim confidently.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a good understanding of British values, including the rule of law and equality of opportunity. Older pupils visit the Houses of Parliament where they learn about democracy. Pupils are fully involved with the school's behaviour policy and learn about the school's values, including forgiveness and courage. The school is inclusive and pupils value others. They learn about other faiths, including Islam and Judaism.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is dedicated and knowledgeable. Governors share the headteacher's vision to provide a rich and exciting curriculum which prepares pupils well for their next stage of education.
- Governors know the school well and have an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They provide challenge and support for staff. Governors are fully involved in school improvement planning. Leaders provide governors with useful information about pupils' progress. However, school development plans do not use this information sharply enough to set measurable targets.
- Governors ensure that training for staff is closely matched to school improvement priorities. For example, they have made sure that training in mathematics has been provided to improve teachers' skills and pupils' learning.
- Governors monitor the school's budget carefully and ask the right questions about the impact of spending decisions on pupils' learning. They keep a careful check on the difference that staff training makes to outcomes for pupils, including pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All statutory checks are in place to ensure the suitability of adults working in school. Appropriate checks are made on visitors when they arrive at the school. The school site is safe and secure.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a high priority. They make sure that staff receive regular and appropriate training to identify any signs of possible danger or potential abuse. As a result, staff are vigilant and understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Staff carry useful safeguarding information with them at all times.
- Leaders have created a safe and caring culture in which pupils feel confident that they have someone to talk with if they are worried. Useful safeguarding information for pupils is displayed around the school. Pupils spoken with during the inspection said that they feel safe.

- Staff provide a range of useful safety training and advice for pupils. For example, pupils learn fire safety, road safety and how to keep themselves safe when cycling on the road. Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. The school has an appropriate filtering system in place to ensure that pupils do not access inappropriate material online.
- Leaders have put in place robust procedures to check on pupils' absence. They ensure that no pupils are in danger of falling behind through unnecessary absences.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations for pupils. They know pupils well and encourage them to make strong progress. In lessons, teachers revisit pupils' prior learning to check their understanding. Staff use questioning regularly to ensure that pupils are familiar with key vocabulary in subjects including science and geography. Pupils listen carefully to teachers' instructions and are keen to contribute to class discussions.
- Teachers plan lessons with a wide range of practical activities and experiences to engage pupils and to support their learning. For example, as part of their learning about rainforests, Year 3 and 4 pupils drew orchids using pencils and pastels. An ecologist captured pupils' imagination by describing his own experience of visiting a rainforest. A visit to a local butterfly house brought the pupils' learning to life. As a result, pupils were able to write confidently and knowledgeably about what they had learned.
- Teachers use subject-specific language precisely so that pupils develop their learning well in different areas of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 5 and 6 history lesson, pupils were using maps of the local area to identify place names. They then checked the origins of the names for evidence Saxon or Roman language. Pupils' workbooks show that they use language precisely in their work.
- Across the curriculum, teachers use a range of informative and diverse texts and novels to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to read regularly, including non-fiction texts linked to different subjects. During the inspection, pupils in Year 5 and 6 were reading a challenging text about the Romans. Staff were skilful in checking pupils' understanding. Reading areas in classrooms are well resourced. Pupils frequently visit the school library. As a result of a wide range of reading opportunities, pupils leave the school with the ability to read with fluency and understanding.
- Pupils write for a range of different purposes and across different areas of the curriculum, including history and science. Across the school, pupils use their grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately in their writing. In a Year 1 and 2 English lesson, pupils used these skills to edit and improve a piece of writing. Pupils have a well-developed range of vocabulary and use this in their writing to make it more interesting.
- Staff teach pupils to use cursive handwriting. Younger pupils practise their handwriting skills regularly to develop a fluent and neat style. However, the handwriting policy is not fully embedded across the school. The consistency of pupils' handwriting varies. Some pupils in key stage 2 have handwriting that is not joined and untidy.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in phonics by the end of Year 1

has improved. Pupils in key stage 1 read regularly with adults to practise their skills. However, some pupils are making slower than expected progress as their reading books do not precisely match their reading abilities.

- In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of number and their written calculations are carefully recorded and accurate. Pupils develop their fluency and confidence by practising their skills regularly. They learn basic number facts including number bonds and times tables. However, pupils have limited opportunities to apply the skills that they have learned to different problems or to develop their reasoning skills.
- In PE, pupils leave key stage 1 with a range of key skills, including skipping, bouncing a ball and catching. Teachers plan regular opportunities for pupils to practise and develop these skills, providing challenge for the most able pupils. Across the school, pupils take part in a wide range of sports and activities and all pupils represent their school at competitions or events.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils learn to live out the school's Christian ethos, developing as caring and considerate individuals who are keen to contribute to the school community and beyond. Through a range of leadership roles, pupils support others. For example, pupil librarians run the busy school library. The active school council is fully involved in decision-making, including helping to choose the school's smart new uniform.
- Staff, visitors and pupils plan a programme of lessons and assemblies which develop pupils' understanding of how to behave towards others. A visitor from the local church teaches pupils how to apply the school's values, such as patience, kindness and peace, to their own lives. Pupils learn to show these values in the way they treat others.
- Leaders provide areas of prayer and reflection across the school, giving pupils the opportunity for quiet contemplation and reflection. The local Rotary Club worked with pupils to design and install a peace pole in the school grounds, inscribed with the message, 'may peace prevail on the earth'.
- Opportunities to develop pupils' resilience and confidence are built into the curriculum. For example, pupils read, perform and sing very regularly to an audience, including in assemblies and at community events.
- Leaders make sure that pupils lead healthy lives in school. Staff encourage pupils to enjoy sports and increase their physical activity. Frequent inter-school competitions develop pupils' skills and confidence.
- The school's curriculum develops pupils' understanding of other cultures and religions. Pupils learn to value differences, including ethnicities, religions and disabilities.
- Leaders plan transition to new schools very carefully. Staff work with secondary schools to ensure that transition is successful.

Behaviour

- Pupils enjoy school life and they attend very regularly. Levels of attendance are above national averages and the vast majority of pupils arrive punctually to school, ready and keen to learn.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are proud of their school and are polite to visitors. Pupils new to the school are welcomed and quickly make new friends.
- In lessons, pupils work with concentration. They listen respectfully to adults and their peers. Pupils are keen to answer questions and contribute well to class discussions. Pupils persevere with their work. Most pupils work with sustained concentration in their lessons.
- Pupils, staff and parents describe the school as 'like a family'. Everyone is known by name and older pupils care for younger pupils at playtimes.
- Leaders have worked with pupils to develop a behaviour policy which encourages pupils to follow the school's values. Pupils report that bullying does not happen. They are confident that staff deal quickly with any incidents. Staff monitor incidents of misbehaviour and deal with these appropriately.
- Pupils live out the school's Christian identity, generously helping others. For example, pupils regularly organise fundraising events for many charities.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have taken a range of steps to ensure that pupils leave their small rural primary school well prepared for their next stage of education. Through a wide variety of trips and visits, pupils learn about the wider world. Plenty of leadership opportunities develop pupils' confidence. Pupils are taught about personal finance. Staff and the school council have recently introduced the school's own currency, Ark, which is given out to pupils who follow the school's values. This can be spent in the school shop.
- Across the school, pupils make good progress in reading and writing. By the end of Year 6, they leave school with attainment above the national averages.
- Leaders have planned a curriculum which gives pupils the confidence and knowledge to read and understand a wide range of texts and books. Pupils leave the school reading with fluency. Their understanding of vocabulary is developed across a wide range of subjects, including history and science. Pupils read confidently to an audience.
- Across the curriculum, pupils write for different purposes. Interesting trips and experiences inspire their writing. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 wrote detailed and precise descriptions about the Romans, following an exciting trip to a Roman settlement near Hadrian's Wall.
- Leaders have taken steps to improve pupils' handwriting across the school. The impact of these changes is evident in pupils' handwriting in key stage 1. However, there is still some inconsistency in the standard of pupils' handwriting in key stage 2.
- In key stage 1, pupils' attainment in writing is improving, although end of Year 2 attainment has been lower than national averages in recent years. Pupils' workbooks

show that they write for a range of different purposes. Pupils use their spelling, punctuation and grammar skills effectively to edit and improve their work.

- In mathematics, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards by the end of Year 6 has been below the national average in recent years. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils develop confidence and accuracy in written calculations. They enjoy mathematics. The steps that leaders have taken to improve pupils' reasoning skills are at an early stage of development. This means that pupils have not developed their confidence in explaining their mathematical thinking and applying their skills to challenging problems.
- In Year 1, pupils' attainment in phonics is improving over time. Teachers plan regular activities to develop pupils' phonics skills and to help them to catch up. Pupils read regularly with adults, although their reading books are sometimes too difficult for them to practise their skills effectively.
- Pupils with SEND make good progress in their learning. Teachers develop pupils' independence by providing them with a range of appropriate resources to support their learning, alongside opportunities to develop their confidence.
- Pupils learn to sing for pleasure and with confidence and skill. They sing very regularly in school and at community events and local competitions.
- Leaders have placed a strong emphasis on developing pupils' skills in PE. Staff focus very sharply on building pupils' skills from an early age. All pupils are encouraged to develop a love of sport and exercise. They take part in a wide range of sports and activities, building their confidence and resilience.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders provide a warm, safe and nurturing learning environment for children in Nursery and Reception. The attractive early years classroom is well resourced, calm and inviting. Outdoors, staff provide children with plenty of exciting opportunities to play, explore and investigate.
- Most children join the early years with skills and knowledge that are at least typical for their age. As a result of well-planned learning opportunities, children make good progress through the Nursery and Reception classes. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is above the national average.
- Through questioning and discussion, staff challenge children's thinking. During the inspection, Nursery and Reception children were pegging socks onto a washing line, developing their fine motor skills. Staff guided the children to look carefully at the sock patterns and sizes in order to match them. Through high-quality interactions, staff develop children's thinking further and help them make good progress in their learning.
- Across the early years, children behave well and play cooperatively. They listen to instructions from adults and play with sustained concentration. This is because staff plan activities that hold children's interest. In the outdoor area during the inspection, children were having great fun smashing blocks of ice to free the paper dolls trapped inside. They worked cooperatively and with determination, investigating different ways to break open the ice.

- Leaders plan engaging activities to develop children's early mathematical skills. During the inspection, children were working with a teacher to divide a set of mini-dinosaurs into two. Other children were working out how to build a set of steps using blocks, refining and checking their work to ensure that the steps were regular. In children's workbooks, the activities that teachers plan in mathematics sometimes lack challenge. This prevents children from making even more rapid progress.
- Leaders have recently improved the systems that they use to check children's learning. These changes are new and are still being developed. They are improving the accuracy with which teachers plan activities to match children's learning needs.
- Staff plan a wide range of exciting activities and trips to broaden children's experiences and develop their knowledge and vocabulary. For example, children travelled to a nearby river to take part in Poohsticks, linked to their reading of 'Stick Man'.
- From an early age, children are encouraged to follow the school's Christian ethos and be kind and generous to others. Children served refreshments to their families to raise money for charity. Children learn about other religions and cultures. They enjoyed making lamps and cooking food for a Diwali celebration.
- Staff plan regular opportunities for children to practise their early reading skills. A cosy, inviting and well-resourced reading area encourages children to develop pleasure and confidence in reading.
- Staff provide activities for children to develop their fine motor skills and get ready to write. During the inspection, children in Reception were cutting, sticking and colouring with great care and precision.
- The early years leader works well with colleagues from other schools to share her knowledge and develop her expertise. Staff in the early years keep their skills and knowledge up to date through regular training provided by leaders, including on safeguarding and first aid.
- Leaders communicate closely with parents. Parents are welcomed into the classroom for visits, information evenings and workshops. Staff encourage parents to share information about their children's learning at home.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments in the early years are safe and secure. Children collect and use equipment safely and move calmly around the classroom and outdoors. Adults supervise children well.

School details

Unique reference number	119523
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10058109

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	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beryl Waddington
Headteacher	Joy Ingram
Telephone number	01524 221418
Website	www.arkholme.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	bursar@arkholme.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 February 2007

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes. Sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector met with some members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and with a representative of the local authority. The inspector spoke with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector met formally with a group of key stage 2 pupils and talked informally with pupils in classes and around the school.
- The inspector listened to a small number of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read.
- A range of pupils' books and progress records were scrutinised by the inspector.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents to seek their views.
- The inspector met with a group of middle leaders.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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