

# Larkholme Primary School

Windermere Avenue, Fleetwood, Lancashire FY7 8QB

## Inspection dates

10–11 July 2019

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The school has been through a turbulent time. There has been a rapid turnaround since Easter. The recently re-formed senior leadership team has made quick improvements. It has shaped a culture of openness, honesty and higher expectations.
- Pupils make good progress in writing, mathematics, geography and history. Pupils want to come to school and they attend well because what they learn is interesting and fun. Teaching in physical education (PE) is particularly effective. Most pupils behave and respond well to adults' instructions. They feel safe. They are active at breaktimes and know how to stay healthy.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well. This is because leaders, including governors, do not use the additional funding well enough to enable pupils to make good progress. Leaders have commissioned an external review and have already put good systems in place to support this group of pupils more effectively.
- Reading requires improvement because the books that some pupils read do not match their abilities. The opportunities to read in other subjects are underdeveloped. Pupils' reading comprehension skills, although improving quickly, are not good. Pupils' attainment in reading has been below average but is now improving.
- A recent change has enabled the subject and middle leaders to be more effective. Leaders have transformed teaching, learning and particularly assessment, which is now accurate. Most parents and carers are much happier with what the school provides than they have been in the past. Communication between school and home is improving quickly.
- Leaders have made improvements to the curriculum but they know there is more work to do, particularly in French. They know that the curriculum needs to be broadened so that pupils learn about a wider range of cultures and are better prepared for life in modern Britain. They have already planned improvement to increase pupils' understanding of British values.
- Leaders make good use of the funding to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They also make effective use of the PE and sport premium.
- Leaders have made important changes to early years. Children in Reception get off to a good start. They are taught to read and write well. They make good progress because of an improved range of well-designed activities. The improved environment inspires children's imagination and learning.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise disadvantaged pupils' attainment, by:
  - ensuring that the governing body evaluates critically the effectiveness of spending decisions in boosting reading outcomes for these pupils
  - improving how the funding is used to improve teaching and pupils' outcomes.
- Raise pupils' reading attainment, by:
  - ensuring a close match between pupils' reading books and their reading knowledge
  - increasing opportunities to read in other subjects
  - improving pupils' reading comprehension skills.
- Improve the curriculum, by:
  - extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures
  - extending pupils' understanding of British values and the full range of diversity found in modern Britain
  - restructuring French so that pupils learn and remember more.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The school has been through some recent turbulence. It was without a senior leadership team for around six months and inconsistency and lack of continuity in teaching disrupted pupils' learning. Parents were rightly very unhappy and lodged a number of complaints with Ofsted. The headteacher has been absent since Easter.
- Since the previous inspection, and particularly since Easter this year, the culture of the school has improved. The recently re-formed senior leadership team, with the new associate headteacher at the helm, has made quick improvements. Leaders have introduced systems that have resulted in the staff becoming reflective and more open about their teaching. This means there is greater honesty between staff about pupils' attainment, the accuracy of assessment and what needs to improve.
- Senior and middle leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and the areas it needs to improve. The leaders have changed the system to check on the quality of teaching. The senior leaders are more visible around the school and there are more visits to classes but fewer formal observations. Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. The checks on teaching are linked well to training to support individual teachers in improving their practice.
- The local authority has provided invaluable support. For example, it brought in the services of a very experienced and highly capable headteacher. The initial intention to support the existing headteacher has now changed to helping to lead the school. The local authority also provided vital information to governors about the accuracy of assessment. Initially, Lancashire local authority's support propped up the school, but now leaders at every level have shown that they have the capacity to improve the school themselves.
- The curriculum is effective. Leaders have, however, rightly identified that lengthy gaps in time between when subjects are taught has the impact of pupils sometimes forgetting what they have learned. This is particularly the case in French. Although they have been taught the language, pupils have difficulty remembering some basic words and phrases. All pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects and there are particular strengths in how PE is taught and structured. The extensive range of clubs and activities outside school, and the trips, visits and visitors enable pupils to make good progress in some key subjects such as history, geography, writing and PE.
- The school prepares pupils adequately for life in modern Britain. It has introduced a focus on different families and has added trips and visitors, but pupils' knowledge of different religions and races is at an early stage of development. Teachers prepare pupils well in social skills, in knowing right from wrong and in the cultural development of pupils, particularly through music and PE. Pupils have been taught about British values and the school has already put in place plans to strengthen this element of the curriculum.
- Since Easter, the school has made good use of additional funding for pupils with SEND. Leaders have acted very quickly to put in place the recommendations for improvement identified in the external review of SEND. The school makes very good use of the PE and sport premium. As a result, pupils increase their PE and sporting skills, their

participation in competitive sport, and their health and well-being. In contrast, however, the school does not make good use of the pupil premium grant. It has acted on the findings of an external review, however, and the deputy headteacher has already created a vastly improved plan of action for the coming year.

## **Governance of the school**

- Members of the governing body are keen and committed. Attendance at meetings is good. Governors have a good knowledge of their roles and responsibilities, particularly in relation to the use of additional funding for pupils with SEND and the use of the PE and sport premium.
- There is evidence in minutes of governors' meetings that the governing body has asked questions and challenged leaders about pupils' achievement, but this has not had an impact on the below-average attainment in reading. Governors have in the past been too quick to take the word of the headteacher. They do not have a good enough understanding of how the pupil premium funding is spent or its impact. They do not know in enough depth whether the deployment of the fund has been successful. The governing body has taken action, realising that the quality of education was in decline. It commissioned external reviews of provision for pupils with SEND, for help with the accuracy of assessment and with an external review of the use of pupil premium funding.
- The governing body has improved its overview and knowledge of teaching and learning. It now has its own access to the school's tracking system so that it can carry out its own checks on pupils' attainment and progress rather than waiting for a headteacher's report. There is greater involvement of leaders at every level of governance.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a culture of high expectations when it comes to safeguarding. Advice, support and safeguarding-related posters are highly visible around the school. A secure signing-in process ensures that no unauthorised people can gain entry.
- There is a good system in place to train staff and update them about local and national initiatives. Since Easter, the deputy headteacher has created a pastoral team that is effective in identifying any pupil or family who may need early help. It is tenacious in following up incidents to make sure pupils have the necessary support. The staff act on concerns raised about name-calling and fighting inside and outside school. They check that there is no follow-up to the behaviour. The paperwork is thorough and detailed. The system for recording and sharing information is secure and works well. Evidence is recorded systematically.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Since Easter, teaching has improved. Senior leaders have returned to classroom teaching and the associate headteacher has moved the staff around so that they are

able to teach to their strengths. Teachers are well organised and teach with confidence. Their knowledge of the subjects they teach is good.

- Teachers demonstrate and explain well knowledge and ideas to their classes. They provide activities to successfully build up pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly in mathematics, writing, history and geography. Teachers use questions well to develop pupils' knowledge. In an English lesson, for example, the teacher guided pupils to look for clues to find the root word 'fly' when trying to understand the word 'flightless'. Similarly, in Year 2, the teacher used the root word 'private' to help pupils understand 'privacy'.
- Leaders have taken recent steps to improve the teaching of reading. Teachers teach phonics well to enable most pupils by the end of Year 1 to reach the expected standard. The associate headteacher has booked training for all staff to make sure they have the knowledge to pronounce accurately the sounds used in reading. There is a good system in place to teach early reading and the subject leader is knowledgeable and effective. Teachers model reading well by reading aloud to pupils. They ask useful questions to check on pupils' understanding. Reading is a high priority in the school's improvement plans. Around the school, classrooms are rich in language and vocabulary. In some classes, pupils' reading books do not precisely match pupils' reading skills. Pupils' reading comprehension is improving quickly because teaching is better. However, there is not much development of reading skills through other subjects. Some pupils find reading at speed, and comprehending what they have read, difficult. There is still some work to do to increase pupils' ability, particularly of the most able, to read and understand complex texts.
- Assessment has been inaccurate and unhelpful. Leaders have introduced new systems and they now have an accurate view of standards. Teachers circulate the classroom well, gauging pupils' understanding, for example, and spotting and correcting spelling errors. Mathematics is taught well. Teachers are thorough and systematic to help pupils build up their mathematical knowledge gradually.
- Pupils with SEND are taught well. The new leader of SEND has transformed adult support, which is now targeted to each individual's needs and is showing success.
- The most able pupils in key stage 2 are taught well in writing, mathematics and a range of subjects including history and geography. However, disadvantaged pupils across the school are not taught well.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are self-confident and learn to be resilient. They develop the skills that they need to be independent learners, for example by taking the initiative to improve their writing by seeking out and using dictionaries and a thesaurus. They are confident in drafting and editing their writing. Pupils maturely discuss their learning with adults and their peers. They are keen to share their ideas.
- Staff foster caring and nurturing relationships, including at breaktimes. Leaders and

learning mentors work closely with vulnerable pupils and their families to provide the right level of support. They work well with other professionals, including social services and counselling services, to provide additional support for the most vulnerable pupils.

- Through the curriculum, pupils learn about healthy eating. For example, in a Year 3 design and technology lesson, pupils learned about the benefits of a balanced diet as part of a cookery lesson in how to make a curry. Pupils develop their confidence through curriculum activities, for example in sport and in music.
- Pupils said that they feel safe in school. The staff act on any concerns that pupils raise about name-calling or bullying. There have been no recorded incidents of derogatory language since the previous inspection. Pupils develop as caring and responsible citizens. Through a range of leadership roles, pupils make a positive contribution to the school community, for example as librarians, play leaders and school councillors.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In most lessons, pupils behaved well. They responded well to adults' suggestions and instructions. They were polite, and concentrated well on tasks and in activities.
- Around the school, most pupils behave well most of the time. Pupils, for example, were enthusiastic in an assembly when Year 3 and Year 4 pupils played ukuleles to show what they have learned over the year to parents. The conduct of the school audience was appreciative and respectful, but they also joined in enthusiastically when invited.
- At breaktimes, pupils socialise well with each other. They have lots of space and equipment to play with, which makes for an active breaktime. Inspectors were approached by polite and enthusiastic children who were very welcoming. Pupils chat quietly in the canteen. They are able to sit with their friends and lunchtime is orderly and pleasant.
- Pupils attend well and very few are absent for more than 10% of school time. However, the pupil premium funding is not used as well as it could be to raise the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement because disadvantaged pupils do not attain well and they do not make the progress that they should. Similarly, some pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is below average. Pupils are only adequately well prepared for Year 7. Pupils' knowledge and skills in some other subjects are not good, such as in French. In this language, pupils have learned many of the things expected for their age but they cannot always recall basic words and phrases.
- In reading, by the end of Year 1, an average proportion of pupils attain the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attaining the standard, however, is lower and leaders have not targeted the support that these pupils need to catch up to meet the standard. Reading for this group is not well developed, which means that they struggle to name or to compare books and authors and they do not read as fluently as they should.

- Most pupils in key stage 1 make good progress. In 2019, attainment at the end of Year 2 was similar to the national average of previous years in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Inaccurate assessment in the past has been rectified. The leaders and local authority brought in specialists from other schools to check that the teachers' judgements are accurate, which they now are. Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in writing. For example, Year 2 pupils' work shows that they started the year writing in simple sentences with basic punctuation, but by the end of the year, they are writing freely, using adjectives, adverbs, and correct spelling and punctuation.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment has been good in mathematics, writing and in science. The published assessment information indicates that pupils have made well-below average progress. However, this is misleading as assessments at the end of Year 2 for these pupils were inaccurate and over high. In their books, however, pupils in key stage 2 clearly make good progress in a range of subjects, including history and geography. Across the school, standards across subjects are rising quickly and securely.
- Pupils with SEND now make good progress. Since Easter, they have been well supported to catch up with their speech and language, their vocabulary and in their reading. In writing, their sentences become more accurate and complex across the year. Across year groups, they write very simple sentences with simple conjunctions and then since Easter, more complex sentences with adverbs.
- Most-able pupils make good progress, particularly in mathematics, history and geography. There is a significantly improving picture in the progress that current pupils make, particularly from Year 2 to Year 5 across a wide range of subjects. The most able make good progress in writing.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children get off to a good start. A majority of children enter Reception with knowledge and skills that are slightly below those typical for three- and four-year-olds. After the year in Reception, almost two thirds of children attain a good level of development and are well prepared for Year 1. The local authority has provided very good support. It established that published attainment at the end of Reception in recent years has been inaccurate. This year's results are accurate and valid. The local authority and the associate headteacher have brought in expertise in early years and, as a result, there has been improvement to assessment, teaching and the environment.
- Children make good progress, including those with SEND and the most able children. This is because they are well taught. Children, in a wide variety of well-planned activities, have the chance to explore, have a go, learn new knowledge and learn to use their imagination and creativity.
- Teachers start teaching the children how to read from the first day in Reception. Reading is a high priority and the scheme that teachers follow enables the children to build up their knowledge of sounds and letters. The associate headteacher has taken over leadership of early years until September. He has rightly booked training for all staff so that they can become more expert in the teaching of reading and more accurate when pronouncing sounds.



- The children cooperate well with each other and they enjoy their learning. They develop and use skills such as resilience, confidence and teamwork. They behave well. They listen attentively for long periods and can concentrate on activities for a good length of time. Children listen to and respond to adults' instructions well. They line up well, and are polite and friendly and inspire each other. A group of children outside negotiated their roles in an imaginary sea activity in readiness for their trip to the beach.
- Additional funding for children with SEND is used effectively. It enables this group of children to make good progress from their starting points in a range of areas including communication, language, reading, writing, mathematics and their understanding of the world. Additional funding through the PE and sport curriculum is also used well. Children develop their physical skills and become more confident and capable in a range of activities. In contrast, the additional funding for disadvantaged children is not used effectively. As a result, very few of this group of children catch up to attain a good level of development by the end of Reception Year.
- There are good links with parents. The staff communicate through an online messaging and assessment system that allows parents to see what their children have achieved. Staff provide workshops for parents, for example in fine motor skills, reading and in mathematics. Parents were complimentary about the change in the quality of communication and openness of the school since the associate headteacher started at Easter.
- The headteacher checks whether the provision meets welfare requirements. He has taken action to thoroughly check that the end-of-year assessments are accurate. He has led training with early years specialists and commissioned external support. This has led to some positive changes in the environment and in teachers' planning and assessment. He understands that although adequate, there needs to be more work to make sure the transition of children into Reception and into Year 1 is smoother and more effective.



## School details

Unique reference number	119299
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10053070

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	280
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Norman Irish
Associate headteacher	Mr David Fann
Telephone number	01253874024
Website	<a href="http://www.larkholme.lancsngfl.ac.uk">www.larkholme.lancsngfl.ac.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@larkholme.lancs.sch.uk">head@larkholme.lancs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018

## Information about this school

- The headteacher is absent with a long-term illness. Since Easter, the school has been led and managed by the deputy headteacher and an associate headteacher.
- Approximately one quarter of pupils have been identified as disadvantaged, close to the national average for primary schools. The overwhelming majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average at approximately 14%.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class. They looked at teaching in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics, history, science and food technology. They also looked at pupils' work in their books and on display.
- Inspectors met several groups of pupils and spoke with pupils around the school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. Inspectors spoke with a range of parents and carers in the morning, in the assembly and at the end of the school day. They looked through the 64 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and at the 12 responses of members of staff to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors met a wide range of senior and middle leaders. They discussed governance with six members of the governing body. They also met two representatives of the local authority.

## Inspection team

Allan Torr, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Joan Williamson

Ofsted Inspector

Elizabeth Stevens

Her Majesty's Inspector

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