

Leigh St Mary's C of E Primary School

Walmesley Road, Leigh, Lancashire WN7 1YE

Inspection dates

10 to 11 July 2019

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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the last inspection, the school has become an all-through primary. Despite a period of instability due to the addition of key stage 2 classes, leaders provide clear direction for the school and a calm, welcoming environment.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's performance. Their monitoring of actions taken by leaders, including their use of additional funding, is effective.
- Leaders at all levels ensure a rich and varied curriculum. Worthwhile activities in many subjects allow pupils to deepen their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Staff receive regular training and feedback to improve their teaching skills. Teaching across the school, and in a wide range of subjects, is good and some is highly effective.
- The teaching of mathematical fluency, reasoning and problem-solving is strong. Pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. This contributes to pupils making good progress in reading across the school.
- The school's work to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress is having a positive impact.
- Parents and carers comment very positively on school life.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. Staff show the highest level of care for pupils, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They conduct themselves well and are polite, respectful and interested in learning.
- The school's procedures to keep pupils safe and to support their welfare are highly effective. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Subject leaders check on the quality of teaching, they organise training and they provide staff with advice. Their work in evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' progress across the school is effective.
- Children in the early years make good progress in most aspects of their learning. However, a proportion of pupils do not achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- In some classes, teachers do not challenge pupils, particularly the most able, to write sufficiently.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve standards by ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in their writing, including across subjects other than English, so that a higher proportion reach the standards of which they are capable
- Improve early years provision, by providing more challenging activities, particularly to develop children's early writing and fine motor-control skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has successfully led the evolution of the school from an infant to a primary school. She has established a culture of ambition for all. Staff and governors share the school's aim to give pupils the best start possible. Staff speak positively about the leadership in the school and are proud to work at Leigh St Mary's. However, the instability resulting from the changes has led to a decline in standards in some areas, for example writing.
- The leadership team is accurate in its assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Leaders' plans set clear priorities that are tackled systematically and contribute to the quality of teaching. For example, training for staff in problem-solving in mathematics has contributed to strong learning in this subject.
- Subject leaders are enthusiastic and demonstrate strong subject knowledge. They carry out their roles effectively. They monitor and evaluate improvements effectively and have a strategic view of the subjects that they lead. There is a positive sense of teamwork in the school. Staff appreciate the training and support they are given.
- The provision for pupils with SEND is a strength of the school. Leaders closely monitor the progress of these pupils. Pupils receive tailored intervention and specialist teaching that helps to support their progress. The leader for pupils with SEND ensures that support staff are highly trained and clear about the expectations of the provision. Teachers review targets to check that pupils are making the progress they should do.
- The curriculum is well planned. Leaders plan topics that motivate and interest pupils. Well-planned activities provide pupils with opportunities to make connections between different subjects. For example, key stage 2 pupils' work on rainforests allowed them to develop knowledge and understanding in both science and geography.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils have equal opportunities, and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Pupils have a strong understanding of values such as individual liberty and democracy.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is also promoted well. Through their lessons, visits and visitors to the school, pupils develop a good understanding of the school's strong Christian ethos. This contributes to the way they behave with each other and the respect they show for different cultures and beliefs.
- School leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding. Pupils eligible for additional funding receive effective support to overcome many of their barriers to learning, especially emotional and social barriers. These actions have contributed to the good progress that these pupils make.
- Leaders use the primary physical education (PE) and sport funding well. Pupils are provided with opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports, including street dance, rugby and football. The use of sports coaches to provide specialist support, including at lunchtimes, has raised the profile of PE, and it also promotes healthy lifestyles and encourages pupils to be more active at breaktimes.
- Parents are very positive about the school. A very large majority of those who spoke to

inspectors commented on the school's warm and welcoming environment.

Governance of the school

- The governing body understands its roles and responsibilities. Governors challenge leaders well to bring about continued improvement. Questions asked of senior staff in response to reports on the progress of pupils are insightful. Leaders provide highly detailed answers and evidence in response.
- Governors are involved in the school's self-evaluation and in assessing priority areas for school improvement. They also conduct visits to the school which are aimed at identifying specific areas that could be improved. This has led, for example, to greater and improved discussion with school leaders on the impact of interventions on pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, including governors, place much importance on safeguarding. Staff at all levels receive regular safeguarding training. They know how to recognise and report concerns using the school's procedures.
- The headteacher ensures that all procedures to keep pupils safe are implemented thoroughly. Leaders are effective in ensuring that actions are pursued so that child-protection referrals are dealt with quickly. Secure checks are made to ensure the suitability of staff to work with children in the school. Governors make regular visits to audit the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures, including a check on the single central record.
- The school site is well maintained and secure. It provides a safe and nurturing place for pupils. Pupils say they feel safe and are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good. Teaching engages pupils well, so they work hard and make progress. On the whole, teaching is well planned and expectations of what pupils can achieve are high in most subjects. Teachers use assessment information effectively to set tasks that are well matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers and additional adults use well-devised questioning to deepen pupils' thinking in a range of subjects.
- The teaching of subjects other than English and mathematics provides opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in a wide range of subjects. For example, work in science demonstrates that pupils acquire knowledge and understanding and increasingly use technical vocabulary. This contributes to the good progress pupils make.
- In mathematics, pupils' fluency and confidence in their arithmetic skills are strong. There has been a focus on supporting pupils in showing a deeper level of understanding. Pupils choose challenges that are matched well to their needs. In this way, they have regular opportunities to apply their knowledge to problem-solving and reasoning questions with increasing accuracy. Evidence from work in books shows that

pupils are able to explain clearly their mathematical thinking.

- Pupils with SEND receive suitably tailored support from well-trained staff. Their work is carefully planned to address their needs and improve their learning. As a result, the progress of these pupils is strong throughout the school.
- Pupils carefully complete the work that teachers set. They are keen to share their ideas and explain what they are doing. Teaching is well directed, and pupils sustain their focus. They often show the initiative required to use the resources supplied, and they seek out support for themselves to complete tasks.
- Phonics is taught systematically from Reception. Younger pupils develop their phonics skills effectively and they use these when reading books which match their needs well. Older pupils enjoy reading and are confident and fluent readers.
- Recent improvements in the teaching of English are beginning to improve pupils' written work. Where teaching is strongest, pupils' writing skills are being developed effectively both in English lessons and across other subjects. However, pupils' written work varies, especially that of the most able, in quality and content in different year groups throughout the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Leaders work highly effectively to support vulnerable pupils. Staff work with agencies proactively in order to address any concerns. Leaders ensure that pupils are well supported through the careful deployment of support staff and the effective use of the 'nurture' room, which provides activities that support pupils' social and emotional development extremely well.
- Pupils are proud of their school and the way they celebrate diversity. They are confident and polite when interacting with adults and are kind and considerate to each other. They develop positive learning habits and attitudes that will enable them to make an effective contribution to society. The nurturing and inclusive culture of the school enables pupils to succeed.
- Pupils enjoy the challenges they are set and show high levels of resilience when tackling a problem. This helps them develop academically. For example, pupils working on solving problems involving volume in Year 5 worked collaboratively until they had found a solution.
- Pupils are confident that staff value them as individuals. This makes them feel safe in school. They have a strong understanding of how to reduce risks to themselves in a range of situations and are aware of different forms of bullying.
- Parents spoken to during the inspection said that staff are caring and approachable.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are extremely polite and welcoming. They are courteous to their peers and adults at all times. All classrooms and areas in the school are calm and orderly and no time is wasted when they are moving around the school. Lunchtimes are well organised and effectively supervised.
- Pupils are proud of their school and take pride in their appearance. Their pride in their work is reflected in the good presentation seen in their books. Staff make the environment stimulating through displays that effectively support their learning. All parts of the school are well cared for by pupils and staff alike.
- Pupils value their learning, remaining focused and engaged and there are very few instances of low-level disruption. Pupils stated that behaviour is very good all of the time. Any incidents are rare and are quickly resolved by staff. The high standards of behaviour expected by staff are encouraged consistently throughout the school through calm and gentle reminders if needed.
- Leaders also work closely with families and external agencies to improve attendance rates. As a result, attendance is improving and is similar to the national average and above the national average for similar schools. Their initiatives to reduce persistent absence have been effective, so that the rate of persistent absence is below the national average this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportions of pupils who achieve age-related expectations in reading and writing by the end of key stage 1 have been in line with national figures for two years. In 2018, the proportion was above the national average in mathematics. However, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 this year has shown a decline in writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics has previously been in line with the national average but has also declined this year.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been above the national figures for two years. Pupils quickly gain a secure understanding of letters and the sounds they represent. They use this knowledge to develop broader skills in reading and writing effectively.
- Inspection evidence, the school's own assessment information and work in books show that pupils are making the strongest progress in reading and mathematics. However, their progress in writing is more variable across year groups. Pupils, particularly the most able, do not have frequent opportunities to develop their writing skills in depth, including in other curriculum subjects.
- The strong teaching of mathematics successfully supports pupils' good progress. The emphasis on mathematics in topic work ensures that they maintain their good progress across the curriculum.
- Pupils with SEND make stronger progress because their needs are identified with accuracy, and appropriate provision is being made. This is also the case for disadvantaged pupils. The progress of current disadvantaged pupils across both key

stages is good due to the quality of teaching they receive and effective use of additional funding.

- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. They develop subject-specific knowledge, skills and understanding in sufficient depth to make good progress in a range of subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is well led and managed. The leader of early years has a clear vision and high aspirations for the children in her care. Staff work effectively as a team for the benefit of the children's learning, well-being and development.
- Phonics is taught consistently from Reception. Children generally use their phonics well when writing words and sentences independently. For example, a group of children were observed writing sentences about a ladybird, which contained the exception words they had been learning.
- Children are well behaved and show an obvious enjoyment in their learning. They play imaginatively together with little falling out. During the inspection, children were working well together to make gingerbread men from playdough, which they had also made themselves.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors stated that they are kept well informed about their children's learning. They appreciate the care and support their children receive. Parents contribute to the assessment information leaders gather. This effective working partnership supports children's progress successfully.
- Staff identify children's additional needs well. They work well with external specialists to ensure that children receive the help they need early and quickly. The leader for children with SEND monitors any additional support to ensure that it is effective. These children make good progress from their starting points.
- Children have access to a wide range of activities that develop curiosity in a safe and nurturing environment. Adults use assessment information well to identify children's next steps in their learning. Consequently, activities match children's needs and interests well.
- Children join the early years with levels of skill below what is typical for their age. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of Reception was below the national average in 2018 and has not significantly improved this year. However, the school's current performance information and children's work show that, from relatively low starting points, their progress is good in most areas of learning.
- Leaders have accurately identified that opportunities to improve children's motor skills are not fully embedded. In addition, some writing activities are not challenging pupils in their learning, especially the most able pupils.
- Adults give close attention to children's well-being. Safeguarding procedures are effective. Staff are well trained and undertake appropriate risk assessments to ensure that children are kept safe. Children's settled and happy starts enable the majority to be well prepared for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	106516
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10107650

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sharon Howard
Headteacher	Mrs Deborah Catchatoor
Telephone number	01942 673 889
Website	www.leighstmarys.co.uk
Email address	admin@leighstmarys.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 May 2008

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. Currently, the school has no Year 6 pupils.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also below the national average.
- The inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Acts 2005 and 2011 was conducted in November 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' assessment information, leaders' self-evaluation, school improvement information and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with leaders to review the impact of their work on pupils' learning and outcomes. They conducted an in-depth analysis of pupils' work across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors visited all classes. Some of these visits were conducted jointly with leaders.
- Leaders' checks on the suitability of staff to work in the school were considered. Inspectors also met with leaders to review the impact of their work to safeguard pupils' welfare and promote good behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors held a meeting with members of the governing body. A discussion was also held with the school's improvement officer.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils to discuss their views on the school. They observed pupils' behaviour around the school and at lunchtime.
- A group of pupils read to the inspectors. Inspectors also heard pupils read during visits to classrooms and talked with them about their attitudes to reading.
- Inspectors gathered the views of parents through informal discussions in the playground before school.

Inspection team

Simon Hunter, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christine Howard	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Curtis	Ofsted Inspector

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