

Nelson St Philip's Church of England Primary School

Leeds Road, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 9TQ

Inspection dates

1–2 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The progress that pupils of all abilities make is variable and not always good.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- Teachers do not always extend the vocabulary pupils use in their written and other work.
- Sometimes teachers give pupils too much direction in their work, which limits the development of independent thinking and problem-solving skills in different subjects, especially for the more-able.
- Pupils are not involved enough in assessing and improving their own work.
- Subject leaders do not always have sufficient first-hand knowledge of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility in order to have a strong enough impact on improvements.

The school has the following strengths

- Despite significant staff changes, the headteacher, with positive support from the governing body, is improving the quality of teaching and achievement. In particular, pupils' spelling and the presentation of their work has improved well since the last inspection.
- Children make a good start to their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are well prepared for their future learning.
- The pupils' knowledge and understanding of letters and the sounds they make is well developed through Key Stage 1.
- Pupils behave well and they feel safe. Learning mentors and other staff provide strong support and guidance.
- The school provides many memorable experiences for pupils through visits, visitors, sporting events and clubs. This promotes their health, emotional and physical well-being effectively.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons including three joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. The inspector also made a number of shorter visits to classrooms.
- Discussions were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and members of staff including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities. The inspector also heard pupils read.
- The inspector took account of 10 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, discussions with several parents and the outcomes from the school's consultations with parents.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including information on pupils' current progress, the school's plans for improvement, the management of teachers' performance, the use of pupil premium funding and documentation and records relating to pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic families, largely of Pakistani heritage. A small but increasing number of pupils are from Eastern European families.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and receive the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A significant proportion of teachers are new to the school since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further and increase rates of progress through improving the quality of teaching to consistently good or better by:
 - improving pupils' vocabulary in a range of subjects and ensuring this is reflected in their written work
 - making certain that pupils of all abilities, particularly the more-able, are challenged to develop their independent learning and problem-solving skills in different subjects
 - involving pupils more in assessing and improving their own work.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - improving and fully implementing procedures for subject leaders to gain a thorough first-hand knowledge of strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and be accountable for subsequent improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils reach standards which are close to average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave school in Year 6. However, pupils of all abilities do not always make good progress because the quality of teaching is not consistently good.
- The results of national tests and assessments for Year 6 dropped in 2012 to well below average. This was largely the outcome of particular staffing issues, which have since been addressed. The results for 2013 show significant improvement when compared with the 2012 national averages. This is reflected in the work of the current Year 6 pupils analysed during the inspection.
- Through Years 1 to 5, many pupils of different abilities make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, too few pupils still make better than expected progress. This is largely because the teaching does not always enable them to think independently enough and to constantly deepen their learning. This particularly, but not only, impacts on the achievement of the more-able pupils.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is variable. Their choice of words and phrases in their writing is sometimes too simple and pupils rely too much on adults to prompt them. However, pupils usually present their work well and spelling and grammar is increasingly accurate. This is a positive improvement since the last inspection.
- In mathematics, standards are also broadly average by Year 6. Pupils do not always have a secure understanding of their mathematical vocabulary and, again, rely too heavily on adults to help them order their thinking and solve problems. However, the strong focus on number and calculation skills is accelerating pupils' progress throughout the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils. Their progress requires improvement because pupils are not always challenged enough in their lessons. However, the targeted support from teaching assistants and other adults is leading to better progress.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium achieve standards which are broadly similar to those seen nationally. Currently, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are approximately a term to two terms below average compared with other pupils in the school. However, well-planned use of additional funding, such as additional teachers and the role of learning mentors, is showing improving signs especially in reading.
- Pupils of all abilities, including those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in learning how letters and the sounds they make work and how they blend to make new words. This is reflected in the results of national assessments for these skills. By Year 6, pupils enjoy reading a good range of books with expression. However, they do not always understand all that they read because their vocabulary is less well developed.
- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those typically expected for their age especially in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress at this stage as a result of at least good teaching and develop curious minds, and their basic skills in reading and writing are well established.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the inspector saw a number of lessons in which teaching was good and occasionally outstanding, over time not enough teaching is good or outstanding. The headteacher and senior leadership team have implemented rigorous procedures to accurately assess pupils' progress and to improve pupils' basic writing and mathematical skills, which are raising standards. However, staff changes, for a wide range of reasons, have limited their full impact.
- Teachers do not always challenge pupils of all abilities to improve their independent working skills and think for themselves. Occasionally, they step in too soon or direct pupils too much. This limits pupils from reaching the highest levels they can, especially the more-able.

- Sometimes teachers do not make certain that pupils understand and apply new words and phrases they are introduced to in different subjects. They do not always challenge pupils to improve the quality of the vocabulary in their written work.
- Although teachers generally mark work regularly, they do not involve pupils enough in assessing and commenting on their own and each other's work. They do not consistently make certain that pupils address the good issues they raise in the marking.
- Teachers make good use of skilled teaching assistants in most lessons. They are well deployed to support and challenge pupils, especially disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, through careful questioning and good demonstration of ideas.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive good and sensitive support from staff who speak their first language. This helps teachers accurately assess the pupils' learning needs and provide largely appropriate challenge and support.
- Information and communication technology is used well to stimulate and instruct. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to research and communicate through the use of computers.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn well through extremely well planned activities they select for themselves both indoors and out. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Reading, writing and number skills are introduced well through short and stimulating songs, rhymes and games.
- Regular homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning in many subjects. For example, pupils detailed research on different animals in Year 4 and 5 formed the basis to their factual writing in English and science lessons.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and take good care of each other. The role of prefects, the school council and head boy and girl contribute to improving behaviour and the welcoming school environment.
- Pupils say they feel safe because they are well cared for by teachers and other adults. They say that bullying seldom happens, and school records confirm this. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, especially cyber-bullying. If bullying takes place, pupils are confident it will be quickly dealt with by staff.
- Adults establish good relationships with pupils who find managing their own behaviour difficult. The learning mentor and support staff provide effective strategies for improving their behaviour and emotional well-being. As a result incidents of poor behaviour, including racial incidents, are rare, as are exclusions.
- Attendance is above average. It has improved well since the last inspection due to the headteacher's rigorous drive for good attendance. For example, the school website displays weekly levels of attendance for every class, and frequent newsletters, awards and certificates promote its importance.
- Pupils enjoy school. They have positive attitudes to work and want to do well. They are keen to answer questions and offer their opinions. Parents and staff express positive views on behaviour and feel it is improving.
- Pupils' behaviour is not outstanding because they are not always fully focused and fired up for learning, especially when teaching is not appropriately challenging.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Several staff are new to their leadership roles, particularly those with a subject responsibility, following staff changes and re-organisation. Procedures to ensure that they have a clear and realistic view of strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility are not fully established. Consequently, their impact on school improvement is currently limited.
- The headteacher has a clear and sustained vision for the school which has ensured

improvements in several areas despite unavoidable and significant staff changes. There are rigorous systems to measure pupils' progress and hold teachers accountable for the performance of their own pupils.

- There is a common sense of purpose and staff and the governing body are enthusiastic and well placed to bring improvements. Consequently, staff morale is high.
- The local authority, and diocesan education services, provide good support to the school through external reviews and training for staff in a wide range of areas. This has helped the senior leadership and governing body develop its effectiveness so that the school is better placed to continue to improve.
- The school provides a balanced and increasingly engaging curriculum. The intensive programmes for early reading and numeracy are improving pupils' basic skills well.
- The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Although the school does not have its own sports field and play space is limited, there is a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' health and physical well-being. For example, the school employs specialist coaching staff and dance teachers, and also provides a wide range of clubs and team games. The new primary school sports funding is being used to provide further opportunities for pupils to play regularly on sports fields and receive further specialist teaching. Many pupils at Key Stage 2 attend swimming lessons during the week and achieve nationally expected standards.
- The school tackles rare issues of discrimination well and this contributes to the harmony within the school community. All pupils are treated equally, but not all make the same progress because the quality of teaching varies.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is led increasingly well and is effectively informed through detailed reports from the headteacher. Since the last inspection the governing body, with support from the local authority and diocese, initiated a full review of its effectiveness. As a result the organisation and membership of the governing body is sharply focused on all aspects of school improvement and more representative of the community it serves. Governors are involved in the school's assessment of its own performance and have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching. They ensure priorities for improvement are focused on addressing underperformance through, for example, the use of the improved assessment procedures to make certain that pupil premium and primary school sport funding are used effectively. They appropriately decide whether teachers and staff should be rewarded with salary increases and review targets for the headteacher.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119437
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426148

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Laycock
Headteacher	Kathryn Ellidge
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2011
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