

Highfield Primary School

Wright Street, Chorley, Lancashire, PR6 0SP

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Outstanding leadership and management by the headteacher have been the key factors in the school's improvement.
- Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are above national averages by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Children in the early years make good progress.
- Pupils who receive extra support through additional government funding achieve as well as other pupils.
- Improvements in the quality of teaching have led to teaching now being of a good quality with some that is outstanding.
- Pupils are polite, kind, friendly and behaviour is good. They say they feel very safe in school.
- Senior and middle leaders carry out their responsibilities very well.
- There is a good level of expertise on the governing body and governors rigorously hold the school to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Over time, not enough teaching is outstanding to enable all pupils to make the best possible progress.
- The most able younger pupils do not consistently apply their good understanding of letters and sounds well.
- The wording of targets set for pupils to improve is difficult for some pupils to understand.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 15 lessons, including one observation carried out jointly with the headteacher. The inspectors also observed group work and listened to pupils reading. They observed pupils as they arrived for school and at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors carried out a review of pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed including systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding arrangements, policies, a record of the school's lesson observations and pupils' work in their books.
- Pupils' views of the school were gathered through informal discussions with individual pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Discussions were also held with representative groups of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 and with parents.
- No responses were available to the online questionnaire (Parent View). However, inspectors considered parents' responses to the school's most recent questionnaire.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Samantha Kidd

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and, therefore, eligible for support through the pupil premium is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make even better progress by:
 - sustaining and building on the good improvements made in the last 12 months
 - ensuring younger pupils use their good knowledge of early letters and sounds to enable them to achieve higher standards in reading
 - ensuring that targets set for pupils to improve are written in language that pupils can easily understand.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have taken decisive and effective action to move the school from being in special measures, to one that required improvement to one that now provides a good quality of education for its pupils.
- Leaders make excellent use of information about pupils' progress resulting in pupils now making good progress.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school, recognising both its strengths and any remaining areas for development. Changes of staff have strengthened the quality of teaching. Leaders recognise that the key role of leadership is now to sustain the progress made and build on it even further.
- The determination to improve standards and learning for all pupils is shared by all staff and this is an important factor in recent improvements.
- Following the last inspection, good improvements have been made in the effectiveness of the work of middle leaders. As a result, middle leaders all have well-written action plans for their areas of responsibility, based on an accurate understanding of their subjects.
- Procedures to manage teachers' performance are very strong. Teachers are fully accountable for the progress made by their pupils. Goals set for individual teachers and progress against these are checked by the headteacher.
- The school does everything it can to meet pupils' needs. This indicates the school's commitment to equal opportunities.
- Work linked with the headteacher of another school and with local schools has been very beneficial in helping raise pupils' achievements.
- Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders ensure that all requirements are met and that the buildings provide a safe environment.
- The school's curriculum has had a strong focus on developing basic skills in literacy and mathematics in recent years but not at the expense of other subjects. Pupils benefit from a curriculum which engages them in their learning. Topics are chosen carefully to interest pupils. There are some after-school activities, including an art club and sporting activities, as well as educational visits, which provide pupils with the chance to explore different things beyond the basic curriculum.
- Parents receive reports about their children's achievements in school and most parents spoken with during the inspection were appreciative about what the school does. The school website is very informative.
- The provision for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and for those supported with additional funding (the pupil premium) is managed exceptionally well to the benefit of those pupils.
- Effective use has been made of the primary school sports funding to enable more pupils to learn new skills. Pupils say they enjoy these opportunities to take part in sport and say they become better at what they do.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Opportunities are taken to teach pupils how to value and respect one another and this is reflected in their good behaviour. The pupils take pride in their school. They have a good understanding for their age of British and other cultures. Events such as a Faith Week help pupils to respect others with different beliefs from their own.
- The local authority over the last three years has monitored and helped the school to improve. As a result, the level of help now provided is 'light touch' as the school is now regarded as providing a good quality of education.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors carry out their duties very well. Individual governors have a high degree of professional expertise and use their skills appropriately. Through committees, such as the standards and effectiveness committee, they have a clear understanding of the performance of the school. Governors rigorously hold the school to account, as well as supporting what it does. They have a good overview of the quality of teaching in the school and ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met. They are kept informed about arrangements to check the performance of teachers and how outcomes relate to rewarding them and tackling underperformance. The funding supporting pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is spent appropriately, as is additional sports funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well not just in classrooms but around school. Around the school, pupils are always very willing to help visitors.
- During play times, pupils demonstrate care and concern for one another.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and are happy to share their learning with their classmates. For example, Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about the work they have done linked to 'Film Week' and the work done to remember events in the First World War.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy school. Pupils' written ideas about how pupils should behave included the comment, 'We believe that we should talk to people in the right tone of voice and do not speak with an attitude.'
- A scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection show that behaviour over time is usually good. The school employs a good range of strategies to support pupils who at times present challenging behaviour.
- All members of staff are very aware that meeting pupils' personal needs are just as important as meeting their academic needs. This they do well and this is an important factor in making sure pupils make good progress. Support staff, including a learning mentor and a member of staff with designated responsibilities to work with parents, are very effective in what they do.
- The school is successful in fostering high-quality relationships and there are good opportunities provided in the curriculum to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have positive views on the importance of helping those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them to take on school responsibilities. These include jobs in the classroom, being a member of the sports council and the school council. School prefects commented that, 'Their job is being a 'mini teacher.'
- Attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are very confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. They recognise dangers when using the internet and know how to avoid these problems.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying for their age, including racist name calling or making fun of others for their choice of lifestyle. They report that if bullying happens it is sorted out quickly.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school's focus on improving the quality of teaching has resulted in teaching that is now typically good, with some that is outstanding. As a result, standards are rising across the school and pupils' progress is good.
- Pupils say they like school because teachers help them to improve in the work. In one class a pupil proclaims, 'Now I've got it!' which followed on from a clear explanation given by the teacher about what improper fractions are.
- A major strength of teaching is the emphasis given to the importance of establishing high-quality relationships.
- Younger pupils' learning about letters and sounds is good as a result of good teaching, but not enough is done to enable pupils to achieve higher levels in reading in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers make sure the work set for pupils is at the correct level, firmly based on information from pupils' tracking data. For example, pupils in Year 5 carry out successfully problem-solving activities in mathematics, well matched to their needs. They are keen to explain what they are doing. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and have high expectations about what they want pupils to achieve.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils ably worked well together in teams to generate a range of adjectives as part of work linked in literacy to write questions for a character. Pupils were very clear about what their steps to success were.
- Teachers mark work effectively and provide helpful comments. Individual targets are set but some of the wording used in describing the targets is difficult for some pupils to understand without adult help.
- Across the school, teachers provide very clear explanations to pupils about what they want them to do.

There are some very good examples of pupils working independently because they have a very good understanding of what they need to do, but this is not always the case.

- The school successfully targets the work done by teaching assistants on pupils who need extra help both in and out of class and teaching assistants provide good support.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Strong leadership and good improvements made to the quality of teaching, including more effective use of assessment information, have brought about significant improvements in pupils' achievements over the last year. From their starting points, pupils now make good progress, including those pupils in mixed-aged classes. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Younger pupils' learning about letters and sounds is now very secure so that by the end of Year 1 an above average number of pupils reached the standard expected for their age in the national screening for phonics (the sounds that letters make). By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved but improvements in pupils' phonic skills have yet to help pupils reach higher levels in reading.
- Progress continues to be good and at times is rapid through Key Stage 2. In 2014, by the end of Year 6, pupils attained higher standards in national tests than in previous years. Thorough tracking data held by the school shows that current pupils are making good progress and are on track to achieve well.
- By the time they leave the school, pupils have good reading skills and clearly enjoy reading widely.
- The school ensures that all pupils achieve equally well. The most able pupils achieve well and the proportion of pupils exceeding the nationally expected levels for their age is close to average. In mathematics, they apply their numeracy skills well. Pupils produce writing of good quality when asked to write in other subjects such as history and science.
- Pupils with disabilities and special educational needs are given good support which enables them to make good and at times rapid progress.
- Pupils who learn English as an additional language make the same good progress as other pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils who are supported through the pupil premium make the same good progress as non-disadvantaged pupils. Any extra support they are given is highly effective and as a result, they achieve as well as other pupils. The 2014 results show that the gap in attainment between this group and other pupils in the school or other pupils nationally has narrowed and is now only half a term behind.

The early years provision

is good

- Provision is good and led and managed well. There are clear systems for identifying children's individual learning needs early in the school year, both personal and academic. Staff work well together as a team.
- Staff check on children's learning carefully and achieve a good balance between activities directed by teachers and those children choose for themselves.
- The teaching in the early years is good and at times outstanding. Teachers and support staff know the children well and provide children with interesting activities. During the inspection, some outstanding practice was observed in helping children develop their early reading skills. Great care was given to making sure letters were sounded out accurately.
- Children are very well cared for and looked after and their behaviour is good. During the inspection, some parents commented about how well the needs of their children are being met.
- Most children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. They soon settle and enjoy doing the work they are asked to do, for example, finding out and counting how many star fish pictures 'are hiding' around the room. Children are keen to work together, for example, working with others in the outside area to make a car park for their vehicles.
- By the end of their Reception Year, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is below that typical but progress from their starting points is nevertheless good.
- Work seen in children's books shows that children have moved from mark making to beginning to form recognisable letters, and observations show their number skills are also improving.

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	119204
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	452016

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Z Kulbacki
Headteacher	Sue Cornall
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2013
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