

Preston St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

New Hall Lane, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 5XB

Inspection dates 20–21 June 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Over time, all pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Children get off to an excellent start with their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Senior leaders effectively monitor the quality of lessons delivered by teachers and teaching assistants responsible for running nurture groups and tailor-made teaching and learning programmes. As a result, much of the teaching is good and some is outstanding.
- New arrivals to the school, who speak little or no English, are well supported.
- Pupils feel safe in school and standards of behaviour are good.
- Pupils are actively involved in decision making, for example as members of the school council.
- The school has made a concerted effort to improve attendance. Consequently, attendance rates are now broadly in line with the national average.
- A range of clubs and trips are available to complement the school's broad and balanced curriculum.
- The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders and staff strive to ensure that every pupil at the school achieves to the best of their ability.
- Governors know the school well and are supportive of the senior leadership team. They are strongly committed to moving the school forward and to ensuring that school improvements are sustained. For example, current Year 6 pupils will achieve standards which compare favourably with national averages.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, teachers set tasks which pupils find either too easy or too difficult.
- Targets set by teachers are not always personalised to the needs of each pupil.
- Teachers' written feedback does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.
- Targets in the school development plan are not consistently clear, precise and measurable to show how well the school is doing.
- There are currently no systems in place to monitor the quality of practice of classroom-based teaching assistants.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, two of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons. They listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' books were also scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school staff, members of the governing body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they brought their children to school in the morning. There were insufficient responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to generate a summary of parents' views. The views of 53 staff who completed questionnaires were also considered.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: the school's self-evaluation form; the school development plan; information about pupils' progress; monitoring files; minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rebecca Lawton

Additional Inspector

Sandy Dixie

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Preston St Matthew's Church of England Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children in local authority care or from service families, is above the national average.
- Pupils are predominately of Indian and Pakistani heritage and the proportion that speaks English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus is similar to national levels.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and thereby accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - matching tasks to pupils' abilities
 - ensuring that written feedback in workbooks clearly tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work
 - ensuring that targets set are always personalised to the needs of each individual pupil.
- Develop further the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that targets set out in the school development plan are clear, precise and measurable to give the school an accurate view of how well it is doing
 - extending the performance management system that is in place to include classroom-based teaching assistants.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery class with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's language, communication and social skills are particularly poor.
- During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress overall and achieve well. Particularly noteworthy is the outstanding progress that children make in reading, writing and mathematics. This is due to high-quality teaching, a stimulating learning environment and activities which capture and sustain children's interest.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 1 with the number of pupils reaching the higher standards comparing favourably with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Over time, pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well in Key Stage 2. However, in 2012, pupils' progress in English and mathematics slowed. The headteacher was able to provide a full and clear explanation for this dip. More significantly, the school's current data show that this trend has been reversed and is sustainable. A scrutiny of pupils' workbooks also confirms the good progress that pupils are making.
- The teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) is well established across the school. For example, children in the Nursery class confidently sound out three-letter words. Such good practice gives pupils the skills to become confident readers.
- Children thoroughly enjoy reading and have access to a wide range of books. Parents actively support their children's love of reading at home. Teachers also monitor closely pupils' choice of books and their progress in reading. One pupil commented to the inspector, 'I chose this book because I thought it would be magical and it was.'
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress taking into consideration their starting points and capabilities. This is due to high-quality teaching and learning programmes that are tailored to the individual needs of each pupil.
- In 2012, Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals reached standards above those of similar pupils nationally in English and mathematics. However, those same pupils did not perform as well as their classmates and were on average a year behind their peers in English and mathematics. Current school data show that this gap is closing. This is due to the effective allocation of the pupil premium funding, which clearly demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress. They achieve well because teachers are sensitive to their individual needs and help is well targeted. For example, the Butterfly nurture group provides small-group support for new arrivals to the school who speak little or no English. As a result, pupils become confident in speaking English and settle well into school life.

The quality of teaching is good

- Senior leaders have judged the quality of teaching to be consistently good with some being outstanding. Lessons observed during this inspection confirmed that this view is accurate.
- Teachers work hard to ensure that the learning environment in classrooms stimulates pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Creativity is a significant feature of the school and many examples of children's artwork are beautifully displayed. Displays also show many examples of pupils' writing, clearly demonstrating that writing skills are transferred into other areas of the curriculum and are not limited to English lessons.
- In the best lessons, questioning is highly effective and deepens pupils' understanding. For example, during a Year 4 physical education lesson, the teacher used questioning skilfully to help pupils understand the bodily changes that occur when breathing deeply.

- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and check on children's progress throughout the lesson. However, at times tasks given to pupils are not matched to their ability, with some finding them too easy or too hard.
- Pupils have very good relationships with all members of staff. Overall, teaching assistants are well deployed, especially those working with children who have special educational needs.
- Advice to pupils on how to improve their work is better when it is given verbally by staff during lessons than it is in their workbooks. Staff do not consistently provide written comments to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. In addition, targets set by teachers are not always personalised to the needs and ability of each pupil.
- Homework given is appropriate to the age and development of each pupil.
- Discussions with parents during the inspection show that they are of the opinion that the quality of teaching is good.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are thoughtful and considerate towards one another and adults in the school. Furthermore, they are welcoming to visitors; for example, they hold doors open and make interesting conversation with them about the reason for their visit.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and enjoy attending. They have a good knowledge of internet safety and of the many different types of bullying that can occur. Pupils say with conviction that 'bullying can happen' but if it does, adults deal with it quickly and effectively. One pupil commented, 'Staff help you by comforting you.'
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they understand that when the alarm sounds, they must vacate the school quickly in case of a fire.
- Pupils behave well in class. However, at times when pupils find tasks too easy or too hard, they become restless and low-level disruption occurs. 'Golden rules' are clearly displayed around the school, reminding pupils of the standard of behaviour that is expected of them. A pupil commented to the inspector, 'We have a strict policy on behaviour.'
- As members of the school council, pupils contribute to key decision making within the school. For example, they were instrumental in altering the times of after-school clubs so that they did not conflict with them attending the mosque. Pupils also enjoy additional responsibilities as play leaders, librarians and class monitors.
- Attendance rates have improved since the last inspection. For example, taking holidays during term time is now actively discouraged. Furthermore, staff work closely with families that find it difficult to get their children to school on time.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has the confidence and support of his staff team and governors. He has identified the school's strengths and areas for development and has the skills and determination to improve the school further.
- The school development plan identifies well-chosen actions to enable the school to continue improving. However, the targets set are not always clear, precise or measurable to show how well the school is doing.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and its effect on the progress pupils make. These procedures are also extended to teaching assistants who run nurture groups or tailor-made teaching and learning programmes. However, there are currently no systems in place to monitor the quality of practice of teaching assistants that are classroom-based.
- School leaders clearly understand that the progression of teachers through the pay scales must be linked to the progress that pupils make in their class. To support this process, teachers undertake regular training to ensure their knowledge and skills are kept up to date.
- Clear systems are in place to track pupils' progress. Regular meetings between senior leaders

and class teachers ensure that any underachievement is quickly identified and addressed.

- Subject leaders are clearly passionate about the subjects they are responsible for. They take care to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is delivered to all pupils.
- The curriculum is enriched by trips, out-of-school activities and visitors to the school. For example, pupils enjoy visiting a local mosque, a park and a farm. Religious leaders, war veterans and representatives from the police force also come into school to work with the pupils. Such positive experiences help to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Safeguarding arrangements and the school website meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority holds the school in high regard and offers effective support. The Butterfly nurture group is used as an exemplar of good practice to other similar schools in the local area.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors hold the senior leadership team in high regard. They are aware of the school's strengths and priorities for development, including the quality of teaching across the school. Regular reports from the headteacher ensure that they are kept informed about all aspects of the school, including the progress that groups of pupils are making. Governors undertake regular training and have an understanding of performance data. This helps them to support and challenge the school appropriately. Governors are involved in setting challenging targets for the headteacher. They are also fully aware that teachers' pay awards are securely linked to the progress that pupils make. Finances are well managed; the governors are fully aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent and of the effect it has on the progress of the pupils who are entitled to it.

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	119603
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	412104

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon A.D Walkden
Headteacher	Mr R.S Small
Date of previous school inspection	15 July 2010
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