

Haslingden St James' Church of England Primary School

Regent Street, Haslingden, Rossendale, Lancashire, BB4 5HL

Inspection dates 18–19 September 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

- From starting points which are much lower than those typically expected, pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school.
- The school is using additional government funding effectively to raise standards, and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are making good and improved progress.
- Teaching is typically good and there are examples of outstanding teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6. Very positive relationships with pupils ensure that they want to please their teachers and are keen to do well.
- Pupils behave well and say that they feel safe and cared for.
- Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and support pupils from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds well.
- The headteacher's inspiring and motivating leadership has established a culture where expectations of pupils and staff are high and has resulted in very strong teamwork; this is moving the school forward very effectively.
- Governors have good knowledge of the school because they regularly check on how well it is doing. They are, therefore, able to provide an excellent balance of support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are not enough examples of outstanding teaching to support even quicker progress. Lessons are sometimes directed too much by the teacher and pupils do not always have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
- The more-able learners are not always fully challenged in lessons.
- Teacher' marking in books is not always consistent in helping pupils make quicker progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons or part lessons taught by nine teachers. One was a joint observation with the headteacher. Each class was observed at least once.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding and the minutes relating to various meetings, including meetings of the governing body.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, senior and middle leaders and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents taken from the school's own questionnaires issued in 2012, a short meeting with one parent and the comments of six parents spoken to during the inspection. There were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View.) They also took into account the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Naila Zaffar, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Marilyn Massey

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized Church of England (Voluntary Aided) primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is 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 through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are much higher than the national average. The largest minority ethnic group consists of pupils who are from Bangladeshi and Pakistani heritage.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English.
- Since the previous inspection there have been significant numbers of pupils arriving at the school speaking little or no English. In addition, there has been a reduction in teaching staff, appointments of senior leaders and the appointment of a new headteacher.
- The school has gained a number of awards, including Activemark for PE (physical education) and the Healthy Schools award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Move teaching from good to outstanding and therefore further accelerate pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring more-able pupils are consistently challenged in their learning, by teachers reshaping lessons as they move along with harder activities, so as to improve the numbers of pupils reaching the higher levels
 - extending the best examples of marking found across the school by providing written comments that precisely tell individual pupils what to do next to improve, so that they can then act upon them
 - making sure teachers only direct learning when it is appropriate to do so and therefore give pupils opportunities to find things out for themselves
 - sharing the outstanding classroom practice that already exists in the school so that teachers can learn from each other.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school, their skills are well below those typical for their age, especially their communication, language and personal skills. The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and so children settle well into school life and make good progress. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with skills and knowledge below those seen nationally.
- Progress over recent years has fluctuated in Key Stage 1 and especially in Key Stage 2. Although pupils' standards of attainment reported in national tests for Year 6 in English and mathematics in 2013 fell, an above average proportion of pupils made and exceeded the expected rates of progress in both English and mathematics in 2012. In 2013, most pupils made at least expected progress.
- The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are exemplary and inspection evidence shows that in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils are now making faster progress than in the past. School data and inspection evidence indicate that the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are on course to meet challenging targets and improve on the 2013 results.
- Children learn to recognise letters and sounds that they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage and through Years 1 and 2. They blend their sounds and build words confidently. Older pupils read with expression and use their reading and literacy skills well. Writing is a strength in school and pupils make good progress both in Key Stages 1 and 2 in this subject.
- Pupils have started to show good progress across the school in mathematics because school has introduced daily mental mathematics session, which are taught in ability groups at the start of the day.
- Improvements can be seen in the numbers of pupils reaching average standards in writing and mathematics. However, not enough pupils reach the higher level in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. This is because they are not always given work which is hard enough. The more-able pupils do not always make enough progress, especially in reading. Their comprehension skills are weak but the school has focused its teaching on regular guided reading.
- Pupils of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics because they are enthusiastic in lessons and willing to take part in all activities. The school is receiving growing numbers of pupils who are new to speaking English and new to the country. Their progress is also good because they are given the right help to improve their language skills.
- The school's leadership works tirelessly to ensure that the pupil premium funding is spent effectively, employing additional teaching assistant support. This is having a positive impact on the achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Gaps between their achievement and that of their classmates have narrowed. In Year 6 last year, the gap in achievement in mathematics, reading and writing between these pupils and others was nearly three terms. However, this was narrowed to one term ahead in reading, two terms behind in writing and four months behind in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from the good support provided by the teaching assistants. Consequently, they make good progress and their attainment is better than that of similar pupils nationally.

The quality of teaching is good

- Overall, teaching is good across the school and some is outstanding. Relationships are a real strength and teachers treat older pupils as mature individuals.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. A notable feature is how well teachers and teaching assistants enable children to use indoor and outdoor environments to stimulate young minds. For example, in the rain children with umbrellas made a

nest for the owl babies.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use effective questioning to engage pupils. In lessons where teaching is outstanding, there is brisk pace and challenge which lead to appropriate levels of skills being developed and applied.
- Occasionally, more-able pupils in both English and mathematics are not challenged well enough and teachers' expectations of what they can do limit their progress. Sometimes, learning opportunities are lost because more-able pupils are not given challenging starting points to their learning. Also, there are times when opportunities for pupils to work independently are lost because teachers sometimes talk too much and do not give pupils the chance to get on by themselves.
- Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. This is evident in lessons and around school. Pupils work well together, value the opinions of others, show awareness of their own and other cultures. Lessons are rarely disrupted through unacceptable behaviour.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide ample reassurance and encouragement. Where marking is good rather than outstanding, it is not specific about what precisely individuals need to do next to make their work even better. Teachers then do not always check that improvements have taken place.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are knowledgeable and support their pupils well to promote good achievement. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with behavioural and emotional difficulties, benefit hugely from a variety of well-thought-out approaches used to help them.
- Through accurate and robust assessments of how well pupils are doing, extra support is provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is typically good and they enjoy learning. One Year 3 pupil said, 'I like coming to school and like to learn tables, I know up to 10 already. Also I like hard homework!' In lessons, pupils are keen to learn and work cooperatively with one another when given the chance to do so.
- Pupils are thoughtful and polite. They show respect to others and make a significant contribution to the school's calm, orderly environment. Older pupils help and sit with younger pupils during lunchtime to talk and show them routines. Pupils have a high regard for staff and these positive relationships encourage pupils to seek help if they need it.
- Pupils feel safe and well looked after. They have good understanding of how to keep safe and talk confidently, for example, about e-safety and the importance of not giving any personal information.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They say that incidents of bullying are rare and, should they occur, staff deal with them effectively. The school takes prompt action to tackle any form of discriminatory behaviour.
- Pupils enjoy learning and coming to school. Parents spoken to during the inspection and through the questionnaires organised by the school said that their children were happy. As a result, attendance is above average and there is a reduction in authorised absences due to the school working with parents and also the introduction of reward systems. Pupils understand the importance of arriving on time.

The leadership and management is good

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the close collaboration of senior leaders have helped drive standards upwards. All leaders regularly and assiduously check the quality of teaching and expectations are high. Senior leaders train and support staff to become as good as

they can be. Arrangements to support colleagues new to the profession are good and provide an excellent start to their teaching career.

- There is a very strong sense of teamwork and, as a result, morale in school is exceptionally high. Staff are united by a clear and strong commitment to provide the very best opportunities for every pupil. Senior leaders know exactly what needs to be done to secure further improvement, demonstrated by their searching and honest evaluation of how well the school is performing. Plans are highly focused for continual improvement, for example the introduction of mental mathematics for pupils. However, the outstanding practice seen in teaching is not shared enough with others in the school.
- A comprehensive performance management process is firmly established and regular meetings to check pupils' progress enable leaders to hold teachers robustly to account for achievement in every class. Teachers are not allowed to move up the promotional ladder if their performance fails to meet the school's high standards.
- Middle leaders are impressive in evaluating their subjects. They know the strengths and areas to develop because they are well trained, trusted and highly motivated. An example of this is the continuous improvement in writing through very accurate assessments.
- The school's curriculum is enriched by enjoyment of sports through the government sport funding initiative. This provides professional development in the teaching of PE, extra-curricular activities such as dodgeball and bench ball. This funding also supported the annual health and fitness week. There are good opportunities for pupils to apply their reading and writing skills when studying other subjects. The good use of visits enriches the work the pupils undertake. An outstanding range of clubs and activities also helps broaden pupils' experiences.
- Safeguarding and child protection systems and practice fully meet current requirements. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and does not tolerate any form of discrimination.
- The local authority supports the school effectively. It provides training for subject leaders and on data analysis. There is good liaison with other institutions, for example through shared professional development, linking with other schools to share cultural awareness and experiences in faith, food and dress.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed and actively involved in checking the school's performance, for example by taking part in learning walks around the school. They receive good information from the headteacher about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and discuss these fully. They have used the performance management system very well to retain, promote and reward good teachers and to tackle underperformance. Finances are managed effectively, including the pupil premium. Governors are fully aware of how this grant funding has been spent and that the achievement of these pupils is good as a result. The detailed checks that school leaders conduct on pupils' progress has ensured that governors have been kept informed about the positive impact additional spending has already had on reducing the gap between the attainment of these pupils and the attainment of others.

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	119452
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426259

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	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Murray
Headteacher	Linda Roberts
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2008
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