

School report

Poulton-le-Sands Church of England Primary School

Church Street, Morecambe, Lancashire, LA4 5QA

Inspection dates	5–6 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- 'This is a fantastic school: understanding and willing to go that extra mile', is a typical comment that reflects parents' high regard for the school. They believe that the school is improving well and are highly positive about the support their children receive.
- Pupils achieve well. They get off to a good start in early years and when they leave Year 6 the majority have made good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability and those who are disadvantaged make good progress.
- Leaders, managers and governors are very clear about the direction the school must take to improve further and have been successful in their drive to improve teaching and raise achievement.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and their good behaviour make a strong contribution to their learning.
- Pupils feel very safe around the school.
- Teaching is mainly good throughout the school. Teachers support pupils well and guide and question them skilfully. This is leading to pupils making faster progress than previously, and their attainment is rising.
- Attendance figures have improved. The school works extremely hard to make sure pupils attend school every day.
- The school provides an extensive range of curriculum activities that are tailored well to match individual needs.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- While improving significantly across the school, not all teaching is leading to pupils, particularly the most able, making outstanding progress.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is not uniformly good in key stage 1 because expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- Leaders and managers do not always know how they will measure the success of their actions to improve the school further.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching and accelerate pupils' progress to outstanding by:
 - ensuring teachers maximise opportunities for pupils to develop their own thinking and reasoning
 - ensuring the most-able pupils are suitably challenged
 - raising expectations about what pupils can achieve in mathematics, particularly in key stage 1.

- Make leadership and management more effective by:
 - ensuring plans for future actions make it clear how success is to be measured.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and other leaders, including governors, have been single-minded in their determination to improve the school since the previous inspection. They know the school well and as a result of their actions the school has improved significantly. Teaching is now good and pupils achieve well.
- Changes to the way the leadership of the school is organised since the previous inspection mean that the headteacher and deputy headteacher now have sufficient time to scrutinise what the school is doing well and what needs to be improved.
- Middle leaders play an important role in improving the school. They make regular checks on pupils' work and the progress they are making, which gives them a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their subjects.
- Senior leaders and governors keep a close check on how well the school is doing and they are able to set priorities for further improvements. However, their plans do not always show how they are going to measure how successful they have been in reaching their targets.
- The school has worked hard to establish what they call a 'coaching culture'. Staff work well as a team. Teachers are given opportunities to observe good practice in their own and other schools. As a result, teachers are much more confident to deliver engaging and exciting lessons where pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and writing. Occasionally, teachers offer too much support to pupils and consequently they are reluctant to think and reason for themselves.
- The additional funding the school receives to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. These pupils are given extra support both academically and socially. For example, the pastoral manager works with these pupils to make sure they can make the most of their time in school. This ensures that, where disadvantage is the only barrier to their learning, these pupils make good progress. The gap with their peers is closing in most year groups and in some year groups has closed completely.
- The curriculum is broad and pupils have sufficient opportunities to study a wide range of subjects. The school does have plans to use their local area more to make the curriculum even more relevant for their pupils. That said, the pupils say they enjoy the many visits and visitors they have that make their learning more interesting. For example, Year 1 visited Lancaster Castle as part of a topic and Year 5 enjoyed the visit of the 'bug man'.
- British values are promoted well in the school. Pupils understand the importance of values such as the rule of law and democracy. In addition, each class also considers Christian values such as hope and compassion. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take responsibility, including acting as school councillors, and attendance monitors at the school parliament. For example, two Year 6 pupils were able to represent the school in London on a trip to the Houses of Parliament.
- The school's work to promote spiritual, moral and social development is good and is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy raising money for a range of charities. They also readily take the opportunities to pray and reflect together. However, the school knows its work to develop awareness of cultural diversity is not as strong.
- The primary school sports funding is used very effectively. Pupils are given opportunities to experience a range of sporting activities including fencing and ghyll scrambling. Funding is also used to allow disadvantaged pupils to access sports activities at local clubs and leisure centres. There has also been an increase in participation in inter-school sports competitions in cricket and orienteering.
- Most parents are highly complimentary about the school. They are extremely appreciative of the work of the pastoral team to help and support families, and the vast majority feel that their children are making good progress. One parent commented, 'My child has developed a true love of learning at this school.'
- The school fully recognises the help and support offered by the local authority. This support has allowed leaders and managers to develop their roles since the previous inspection and focus on improving teaching and raising achievement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school well. They have a range of skills that allow them to challenge and support leaders and managers. They ask probing questions in their meetings and spend time in school talking to teachers and pupils, which gives them a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, they do not always insist that plans to improve the school have clear ways to

measure success. This reduces their effectiveness in measuring how well the school is performing over time.

- Governors have a very good understanding of how additional funding is used to support disadvantaged pupils and the impact this spending is having on improving their achievement.
- Governors receive a number of reports from a range of leaders and so they know that teaching is good. Governors hold teachers to account for their performance effectively and are willing to reward teachers for their work when they are satisfied they are performing well.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school makes sure that staff are well trained and vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. Classrooms are well organised, lessons are engaging and pupils are keen to learn.
- Teachers make it clear what pupils will be learning. They question and probe pupils' understanding, guide them through activities and have a good understanding of where pupils are in their learning. However, sometimes the most-able pupils are not moved to harder work quickly enough and, as a result, they do not always make as much progress as they could.
- The support that teachers give to pupils is well thought out and structured. Pupils appreciate the guidance they are offered. However, sometimes pupils are 'spoon fed' information which hinders the development of their ability to work things out for themselves.
- The teaching of reading is effective. Pupils are given many opportunities to read in class. For example, in Year 6, pupils particularly enjoy the work of David Walliams and are able to answer a range of questions about the books they have read. In Year 2, pupils enjoy choosing their own books. They use their understanding of phonics and other strategies to read a range of stories.
- The teaching of mathematics in key stage 2 is good. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, resulting in good progress. However, expectations in mathematics in key stage 1 are not yet high enough. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work on mathematics problems in different ways and they are not always given guidance on what to do to improve their mathematics further.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to get pupils to think deeply. For example, in Year 6, an inspector observed pupils using their knowledge of angles to find and identify angles in triangles and around a point.
- Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to use their writing and mathematics skills in other parts of the curriculum. For example, in Year 5, an inspector observed pupils using their mathematical skills to measure Viking longboats.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils with their learning. They have high expectations of what pupils can do and they intervene to help pupils who may be struggling with a new idea or concept. This helps pupils, including those who have special educational needs or disability, to make good progress from their starting points.
- Since the previous inspection, teachers have improved the feedback they give to pupils. Feedback is particularly effective in reading and writing where pupils know precisely how to improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe and many parents agree. The school's work to keep pupils safe is robust. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about keeping themselves safe in a variety of situations. A visit from an external provider supported this, teaching Year 5 and 6 pupils about the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse, while younger pupils learned how to stay healthy.
- The pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe on the internet and how to report things that might make them feel uneasy or uncomfortable.
- Pupils know that there can be different forms of bullying and this may include prejudiced-based bullying. The school works hard to ensure that bullying does not occur, and on the rare occasions that things do

happen, pupils and parents say it is dealt with swiftly and effectively.

- There is extremely effective support for pupils who are vulnerable, and their families. The pastoral manager and other support staff work tirelessly with a range of other agencies to ensure these families receive appropriate and timely support.
- Pupils understand the need for a healthy lifestyle. There are a number of displays encouraging pupils to eat healthily, and many pupils take part in sporting activities both in school and outside to promote their well-being.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils respond well to the school's effective behaviour management system. A small number of pupils can demonstrate quite challenging behaviour in school. However, teachers and other adults are extremely skilful in dealing with this and, as a result, lessons are not disrupted at all and pupils make good progress.
- Pupils are extremely polite both around school and to each other. There is a calm atmosphere, which contributes to purposeful learning in the classrooms.
- Attendance is good; pupils are very keen to come to school. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced over the last year. This is a result of the effective work of leaders and the pastoral manager to ensure parents fully understand the need for consistent attendance and the impact of poor attendance on pupils' progress.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- At the time of the last inspection, achievement was found to require improvement. As a result of this, leaders and managers raised their expectation of what pupils could achieve and held teachers more accountable for pupils' progress. Consequently, attainment has risen and overall progress is now good across the school.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2015, the attainment of pupils in reading and mathematics was broadly equal to the national average and was above the national average in writing.
- In 2015, achievement at the end of key stage 2 was slightly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportions of pupils making expected progress were broadly in line with the national average and the proportions making better than expected progress were broadly in line in reading, above in writing and below in mathematics. This shows a significant improvement in achievement since 2013 when pupils were performing well below average in all areas and reflects the school's success in raising attainment over time.
- Current school data and work in pupils' books shows that, as a result of better teaching, pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics in key stage 2.
- Key stage 1 pupils also make good progress in reading and writing. However, their progress in mathematics is not as good because teachers' expectations about what they can achieve are not high enough.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is improving, but not enough make better than expected progress. This is because they are not moved on to challenging work swiftly enough or given sufficient opportunities to think and reason for themselves.
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check was above the national figure in both 2014 and 2015. Early reading is taught very effectively and daily phonics sessions mean pupils have many strategies to help them tackle new words.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are extremely well supported. The special educational needs coordinator ensures that very good provision is in place, enabling these groups to make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupil premium funding is used successfully to support disadvantaged pupils to achieve well. The school's own data shows that these pupils make good progress. Sometimes this progress may be hampered if they have additional barriers to their learning, but in most year groups the gap with their peers is now closing.

Early years provision

is good

- The very good leadership in the early years provision has ensured that the proportion of children attaining a good level of development has been above average for the last two years.
- Children enter the Reception Year with skills below those typically expected for their age. Good teaching and an early emphasis on language acquisition and development in the first few weeks mean that children make rapid progress and attain well.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know the children extremely well and have excellent relationships with them. Adults probe, question and engage with children to develop their learning across all areas of the curriculum. For example, skilful adult-led discussion during a bug hunt allowed the children to demonstrate their knowledge of a whole range of bugs.
- Children are extremely keen to learn and are very inquisitive. One child enquired, 'Do you have a scorpion? They can bite and sting and nip.' Others made insects and spiders for their bug hotel in the creative area.
- Children enjoy learning outdoors and, in particular, enjoy the mud kitchen. Opportunities to engage in other activities such as climbing and water play are more limited, but staff are aware of this and have plans to improve the outdoor area.
- Children benefit from a wide range of experiences in the early years classroom. For example, a group of girls were keen to show the inspector a book about their visit from a police officer. They were equally excited to find out who the mystery story reader was at the end of each day.
- The procedures for assessing the children are robust. Teachers and other adults observe and talk to children about their learning. They then move the children on in their learning or create activities to match their interests.
- Relationships with parents are excellent and parents say they value the chance to talk to staff each morning. Parents are asked to play a part in their children's learning in a variety of ways, including by text message, and this is contributing to the good progress children make.
- Children are extremely safe and staff ensure rigorous safeguarding policies are kept up to date and implemented.

School details

Unique reference number	119538
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10012127

This inspection 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	179
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Woodhouse
Headteacher	Victoria Bould
Telephone number	01524 413 273
Website	www.poulton-le-sands.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	email@poulton-le-sands.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 January 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support from the pupil premium funding is higher than the national average.
- There have been few changes to leadership and management since the last inspection. However, staffing has been restructured to ensure there is sufficient capacity in the leadership team. This includes the appointment of a pastoral manager and a senior leader with responsibility for the curriculum. The deputy headteacher has dedicated management time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in lessons, including one observation carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils reading. They looked at examples of pupils' work and observed pupils at lunchtime and breaktimes.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. They spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- The inspectors took account of 11 questionnaires returned by staff and 20 responses to the pupil questionnaire. There were 33 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' current progress across the school, the school's view of its own effectiveness, and how the school checks on the quality of teaching and learning.
- The inspectors checked the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and looked at records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

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