

Accrington St John with St Augustine Church of England Primary School

Maudsley Street, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 6AD

Inspection dates

10–11 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- The school provides a bright and inspiring learning environment.
- Pupils' attainment has improved significantly in all key stages. Pupils attained broadly average levels in standardised assessments in 2013.
- Pupils' work shows that this upward trend is continuing and pupils are making good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is consistently good. It builds on pupils' knowledge and skills effectively over time.
- All staff set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and the quality of their work.
- Pupils' good behaviour in lessons helps them to achieve well. They are extremely polite and well mannered. They feel and are safe.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher, other leaders and governors.
- Self-evaluation is searching and accurate. Teaching has improved as a result of effective performance management and good quality professional development.
- Strong leadership, highly effective teamwork and good teaching provide the school with good capacity to secure further improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the most able pupils are not making as rapid progress as others, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Marking is not always precise enough to provide pupils with additional challenge.
- There is scope for middle leaders to build further on the good work they have started.
- Provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was deemed a Section 5 inspection at the school's fifth special measures monitoring inspection.
- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and in support groups. They examined pupils' work in each year group in detail. Work scrutiny was conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The lead inspector heard pupils read in all previous monitoring inspections. She met with groups of pupils from the Pupil Parliament and with pupils receiving additional support. Both inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation including pupils' progress tracking, records from governing body meetings, performance management and safeguarding procedures, attendance and behaviour records.
- Discussions were held with school leaders, all teachers and five members of the governing body, including the Chair and vice-chair. The lead inspector met with two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 25 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), and the schools own parent, staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Yvonne Mills-Clare

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average size primary school. Pupils are taught in year group classes from Reception to Year 6.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs has recently doubled and is above average.
- There is a larger than average proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are in the care of the local authority and children from service families.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language, is below average.
- There have been a number of changes to staff and the governing body in the last 18 months, including the recent appointment of a substantive headteacher and the secondment of three staff taking on leadership roles.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on good teaching in order to continue to raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics by:
 - increasing the challenge for the most able pupils in writing and mathematics
 - enabling pupils to extend their mathematical skills by applying their knowledge to solve challenging problems
 - making sure that marking gives pupils precise advice about how they can develop their writing techniques and mathematical skills and that, where appropriate, it provides additional challenge
 - developing the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that it provides as stimulating a learning environment as the classroom
 - sharing the good practice within the school and through extending links with other schools.
- Continue to develop the leadership role of middle leaders.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are below those typical for their age; their communication and language skills are particularly low. Early Years practitioners have established good links with families, which help children to settle quickly and make good progress from the start. The 'Sure Start' initiative successfully helps children to improve their language skills from the earliest stages.
- Pupils continue to build on this good start across Key Stage 1. Their attainment at the end Year 2 has improved significantly over the last three years. In 2013, pupils attained closer to the national average for reading, writing and mathematics, although still slightly below.
- Attainment at Key Stage 2 has also improved. Pupils attained above average levels in reading in 2013. Their attainment in writing and mathematics improved from previous years but was still below average. This is because pupils in that Year 6 group did not make enough progress due to highly disrupted and inadequate teaching in the past.
- The inadequacies in teaching have been eradicated and staffing has been stabilised, providing good quality teaching across the whole school. As a result, pupils are now making good progress from their starting points and the majority are working at expected levels or above in each year group.
- Pupils' work shows rapid progress since September 2013. In Year 6, teaching is successfully helping pupils to fill gaps in their learning and to catch up quickly.
- Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals have historically done less well than other pupils in the school, but this gap is closing. In 2013, eligible pupils at Key Stage 1 did better than other pupils in the school and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals nationally. At Key Stage 2, they were around two and a half terms behind other pupils in the school in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Pupils' work shows that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals are now making the same good progress as others in the school.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs and lower-ability pupils make rapid progress due to effective support to help them learn within the classroom and in additional support groups. Those of middle ability achieve well in lessons because they are provided with suitably challenging activities.
- The most able pupils do not always make the same rapid progress as other ability groups in mathematics and writing because they do not move on to more challenging work quickly enough. They make good progress in reading.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good in each year group. Pupils say learning is fun and interesting; they know their learning targets and are proud of their achievements.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and make good progress because activities are varied and teachers share their knowledge well. The improvements to teaching are supported by effective professional development and weekly meetings where teachers can share best practice.
- Good account is taken of pupils' prior learning to plan new learning for different ability groups. Learning is assessed well and tasks are reshaped where necessary. As a result, teaching builds on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding effectively over time. This is particularly effective for lower and middle-ability pupils; many of these pupils are making better than expected progress.
- Where there are gaps in pupils' learning due to previously inadequate teaching, teachers are assessing precisely where the gaps are and ensuring that pupils catch up rapidly, including using additional support when necessary. This is proving particularly effective in Year 6.

- There are occasions, however, when some of the most able pupils spend too long going over what they can already do, particularly when using mathematical calculations. They do not have sufficient opportunity to practise and apply their knowledge to more challenging problems.
- Pupils' work is marked frequently and high expectations are set for the quantity and presentation of work. The quality of pupils' work in their books has improved immensely as a result. However, marking does not always give pupils precise advice about how to move their work to the next level. In writing, for example, marking does not always help pupils to develop their writing skills and techniques. In mathematics, it does not provide additional challenge when it is clear that pupils have a full understanding of calculation methods and mathematical ideas.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and reading has improved significantly. Skills are taught systematically from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. Pupils have frequent opportunities to read and enjoy a range of reading materials.
- Writing skills have been promoted across all subjects, enabling pupils to write capably for many different purposes. There is excellent display of writing around the school, which is informative and interesting for pupils.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, effective teaching is helping children to get off to a good start. The classroom is stimulating giving children a real love of learning and a wide range of experiences. The outdoor area has been developed but is not as interesting as indoors, meaning that children do not readily choose to learn outside.
- Teaching assistants are well briefed and organised effectively to support teaching of different ability groups. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class. In the 'nurture group' pupils are successfully helped to develop positive behaviour for learning. Additional group support is similarly successful in helping pupils to develop their language and literacy skills.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding benefit from a range of additional support from both teachers and teaching assistants, which is helping to close any gaps between their achievement and that of others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to do their best. They like to share their ideas and concentrate well during independent work. They cooperate well and respect each other's views and ideas.
- Pupils are exceptionally polite and courteous to visitors, showing good manners at all times. They show respect for each other and staff in lessons and as they move around the school.
- The daily brief focus on 'marvellous manners' is highly effective and fully engages the interest of pupils. They enjoy opportunities to take a leading role in presenting their views on behaviour and good manners.
- Behaviour in the playground is good, especially now that pupils have structured games and activities to interest them. Leaders have made good use of sports funding to provide additional equipment and training for staff to help pupils to develop their skills at break-times. The new garden and quiet areas are also popular.
- So far, these developments have focused on the Key Stage 2 playground. Developments in the Key Stage 1 playground are in hand because currently, some younger pupils can get over-excited when running around.
- Members of the Pupil Parliament are rightly proud of their contributions to the playground developments. The parliament is well organised and gives pupils the opportunity to contribute their ideas on many aspects of the running of the school and on their learning. Pupils have a mature attitude to discussion and respectfully listen to the views of the fellow members.
- There are a few pupils who have struggled to manage their behaviour. This resulted in a higher than usual number of fixed-term exclusions at the start of the school year as the new behaviour policy was established. There have not been any repeat incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils understand the new behaviour code and those who were struggling are now proud to be at 'green' on the new 'traffic light' system.

- Weekly 'well-being' meetings give all staff the opportunity to share information and ensure that pupils who may be experiencing particular challenges are well supported by all staff.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are sure that there is now no bullying or aggressive behaviour in school. They say there has been in the past but 'it is fully sorted now!' They feel confident that they can talk to staff and any concerns will be taken seriously and acted on. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying. Racist incidents and homophobic name-calling are extremely rare and tackled quickly.
- Attendance is broadly average and improving. Persistent absence has reduced and is below average, following good support to those families at risk.
- The vast majority (92%) of parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View, think that their child feels safe and is looked after well. The same proportion feels that the school makes sure pupils are well behaved and that the bullying is dealt with effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- There has been a tangible change in the culture of the school brought about by strong leadership and effective teamwork amongst all staff. There is a stimulating and happy learning environment where children and staff thrive.
- The headteacher is providing excellent leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other leaders. Staff say they feel energised and empowered to take initiative.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is searching and accurate. It is based on rigorous systems to monitor and improve teaching and raise pupils' achievement. The areas requiring further development are clearly identified and understood by all staff. Planning for improvement is effective and focused on the right priorities.
- There is consistent application of key school policies relating to behaviour management, assessment, presentation of work, mathematical presentation, lesson planning and teaching and learning. Staff are also keen to share ideas and learn from each other.
- Teaching has improved significantly. Teachers and teaching assistants are enthusiastic and set high expectations for themselves and the pupils they teach.
- Effective management of teachers' performance sets challenging targets for pupils' achievement, the impact of leadership roles, and the quality of teaching. Leaders' monitoring of teaching provides clear feedback on what could be improved.
- Pupils' achievement is improving as a result. Leaders and governors ensure that good relationships are fostered, discrimination is tackled and all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and make good progress. Regular meetings to analyse pupils' progress identify pupils who are not making the best possible progress and good quality support is put in place.
- The majority of staff have previously progressed to upper salary scales but all are now aware of the responsibilities that go with this.
- Links with a nearby school have proved fruitful in promoting the wider sharing of good practice. There is scope to extend partnership working further.
- The deputy headteacher is providing good leadership of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Thorough monitoring of pupils' progress gives a clear indication of where support is working well and where it needs to be adapted.
- Subject and key stage leaders are developing effective skills to improve teaching and achievement in their area. Developments across the whole school are still at relatively early stages and all are keen to extend their leadership roles further.
- Pupils enjoy a broad range of subjects, including art, sports, science and information and communication technology. The curriculum is well planned to ensure they have chance to develop their creative and physical skills. Reading and writing are promoted well in many subjects. The application of mathematical skills is less of a focus and requires further development.
- Staff promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well in lessons,

assemblies, in the daily focus on 'marvellous manners' and by being strong role models in these areas. The school enjoys strong links with the church.

- There are extremely rigorous procedures to safeguard pupils and ensure their health and safety in school. All statutory requirements are met.
- The vast majority of parents (92%) who responded to Parent View feel that the school is well led and managed. Those who responded to the school survey and who spoke with the inspector were highly satisfied with the new leadership.
- Local authority advisers have supported the school well with good quality action planning and effective advice. They have built capacity in the school leadership team.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have made a number of key decisions to ensure the right people are appointed to lead and teach in the school. They have managed this well, with very good support from the local authority.
- They have taken effective action to improve the organisation of committees, recruit governors with relevant expertise, and to develop their skills. They have an increasingly visible presence in the school, participating in work scrutiny, learning walks, evaluation of the learning environment, talking with pupils and visiting classes. As a result, they are well informed and able to ask challenging questions of leaders. They have a clear view of how well the school is performing and the priorities for further improvement.
- Governors are managing the performance of the headteacher effectively, linked to the school improvement plan. They have a good overview of the performance management procedures for other staff.
- They are monitoring the use of the additional pupil premium and primary school sport funding to make sure it is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement and their well-being.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	119445
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	432586

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Binks
Headteacher	Mark Proctor
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2012
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