

Penwortham Middleforth Church of England Primary School

Hill Road South, Penwortham, Preston, Lancashire, PR1 9YE

Inspection dates 5–6 November 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are extremely polite, well mannered and work hard in lessons.
- Pupils' attendance is above average because they are proud of their school, value their teachers, enjoy learning and feel safe.
- Achievement is good because pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and reach at least average standards in English and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils eligible for free school meals all make the same good progress as other pupils at the school.
- Children get off to a successful start in the Reception class.
- Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding teaching across the school.
- Teachers and learning support assistants work well together to make sure tasks set meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of stimulating and exciting experiences for pupils.
- The school makes a valuable contribution toward pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the school. She is well supported by the committed governing body, school leaders and her team of staff. Together they are making sure that the quality of teaching and pupils' progress continue to improve even further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching in the school.
- Pupils do not always have the opportunity to complete corrections and learn from their mistakes.
- In some lessons, the pace of learning is not as swift as it could be.
- Some of the targets in the school development plan and some of those set for teachers are not always precise and measurable enough to give a clear picture of how well the school is doing.
- Leaders do not always make comparisons with other schools nationally when considering the effectiveness of the school's work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 parts of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. They also observed sessions taken by teaching assistants and listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and school staff.
- Inspectors took account of 37 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as responses to parental, staff and pupil questionnaires distributed very recently by the school. They also received a letter from the governing body.
- A range of documents were considered by inspectors, including the school’s analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils’ progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils’ books.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Buckley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Middleforth Primary School is slightly smaller than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding provided for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from services families and children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation 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?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and thereby drive pupils' progress at an even faster rate by making sure that:
 - lessons always move forward at a brisk pace so that no learning time is lost
 - pupils are always reminded to complete their corrections so that they can learn from their mistakes.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - making sure that targets set out in the school development plan and those set for teachers are consistently clear, precise and measurable to give the school a clear view of how well it is doing
 - using all information available, including nationally published figures, to help school leaders develop and share an accurate view of the school's work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children usually start Reception class with skills and knowledge typically expected for their age. However, literacy and numeracy skills are generally below those in other areas. Children make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their individual starting points. This is because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding and a range of stimulating tasks are provided that are very well matched to the ability and interests of the children. As a consequence, children are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics from 2011 to 2013. However, results have been steadily rising and school data indicate that this improvement is set to continue.
- The 2013 test results show improved and overall good progress for pupils leaving Key Stage 2. Most pupils made the progress expected of them and, compared to earlier years, an increased proportion of pupils made more than the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils making more than the progress expected of them is now similar to national levels. This shows a rising trend of achievement and is reflected in the standard of the work seen in pupils' books as well as in school data. Consistently good progress is now being made in all classes across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Younger pupils are successfully taught phonics (matching letters to the sounds they make) and the proportion of pupils working at the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check has been above the national average for two years. The school encourages a love of reading and pupils continue to use their reading skills well as they move up through the school. Pupils read regularly and the Year 6 pupils that read to the inspector did so fluently; they confirmed their enjoyment of reading and were able to explain how it helps them with their learning in other subjects.
- The school provides highly focused support for the most-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils from these groups are learning well and are now making consistently good progress across school. This is because of the effective strategies put in place by school leaders.
- In Year 6 in 2013, the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was approximately one year behind that of other Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Within this group, there were pupils with additional needs. However, current school data confirm that any gaps between pupils eligible for free school meals and other pupils are closing. There is now no difference between the progress made by these pupils and that of their classmates. Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding now make consistently good progress. This confirms the school's commitment to ensuring every pupil is treated fairly and has an equal opportunity to achieve.

The quality of teaching is good

- Evidence, including work in pupils' books, shows that the quality of teaching is typically good. Most lessons observed during the inspection were good and some were outstanding. The emphasis on raising the quality of teaching has brought about improvements in pupils' progress.
- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics has been enhanced by developing the subject knowledge of teachers and learning support assistants through training and peer support. Writing, particularly boys' writing, has historically been weaker than other subjects. The school has tackled this by providing increased opportunities to practise both literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects and offering a more exciting curriculum that captures pupils' imagination and encourages them to want to write about their experiences. Moreover, staff teams meet regularly to discuss pupils' progress and this helps teachers to plan tasks that are sharply focused to meet the individual needs of all pupils.

- Teachers' marking is frequent and detailed; they celebrate what pupils do well and give good guidance to pupils on how to improve. They also provide opportunities for pupils to assess their own learning both during lessons and following a piece of work. However, some teachers do not always make sure that pupils complete their corrections so that they can learn from their mistakes.
- In the best lessons, teachers question pupils carefully to assess learning and develop understanding. Pupils have the opportunity to share their ideas and the swift pace and interesting subject matter ensures all pupils are fully engaged in their learning. All of these characteristics were evident during a Year 6 mathematics lesson, when pupils were learning how to find a percentage of an amount. Activities such as comparing the cost of holidays for families of different sizes really engaged the learners well. However, in some lessons, the pace of learning slows because pupils may have to listen for too long to the teacher, copy information or wait for adult support.
- Teachers and learning support assistants work successfully together and provide suitable tasks for pupils with any additional needs. A wide range of extremely effective small-group and one-to-one sessions are carefully planned and delivered to meet the needs of these pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes toward learning and respond very well to the clear and effective systems the school uses to manage behaviour. As a result, behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school and school records show that this is typical.
- Middleforth pupils are really thoughtful and considerate toward adults and one another. They are exceptionally welcoming, inviting visitors to sit and share what they are learning. They are also superbly polite and enormously proud of their school. One pupil wished that she could come to school during the holidays, while another said that the only change she would make to school was to be able to stay longer.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and their parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils understand different forms of bullying and the difference between bullying and falling out. They are firm in their belief that there is no bullying in school but, if there were, an adult would very quickly and effectively deal with it or any other concern.
- Pupils take their roles really seriously. Year 6 pupils are able to choose their responsibilities from a wide range of opportunities including taking on the roles of school councillor, eco-warrior, buddy, librarian, health and safety councillor or prefect, to name but a few. Members of the school council are proud of the contribution that they have made toward collecting money for charities, including sponsoring a child, Ruquia, from Africa. What is more, the 'guardian angels' provide excellent support to pupils with additional needs, helping them to settle quickly and enjoy all that school has to offer.
- The primary school sport funding is being used to pay for support from external coaches. This is to improve the skills of staff so that they can teach a wider range of sporting activities to a higher standard. Moreover, the active health and safety pupil councillors encourage pupils to exercise to improve health and well-being. They organised the collection of supermarket vouchers to purchase equipment for physical education.
- Attendance is above average and pupils arrive at school on time, which reflects their enjoyment of school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a clear view of how successful the school can be. She enjoys the confidence and full support of her staff and governors. Together with her leadership team, she has successfully introduced effective systems to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. School leaders have the capacity to improve the school further.

- Though teachers' objectives are closely linked to the school's planning documents and both are focused on improving pupils' progress, targets set are not always clear enough to steer rapid improvement in standards or provide an accurate view of how well the school is doing.
- The quality of teaching and learning is regularly checked by senior and subject leaders. There is a highly effective system in place to make sure that all staff can access the training and support that they want or need and share their new knowledge and expertise with staff within and beyond the school.
- School leaders are proud of their systems for tracking pupils' progress. However, the school's view of its own performance is generous, particularly over-emphasising the level of progress made by pupils.
- Good attention is given to developing pupils' personal skills, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. The curriculum is carefully planned to appeal to pupils' interests and learning is especially enhanced by a range of after-school activities and exciting trips that bring learning to life.
- The local authority provides a light-touch support for this good school.
- The governing body fulfils statutory duties, including safeguarding and budgetary requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are extremely committed to the school. They know its strengths and priorities because they visit the school regularly. The governing body is kept informed about the quality of teaching and understands the link between this and pupils' progress. Consequently, governors make sure that teachers' progression through the pay scale is linked to how effective they are. The governing body also reviews information about standards in school, but has been less well informed regarding how standards at Middleforth compare to national standards. However, governors have the skills and expertise to remedy this and regularly attend training that supports them to undertake their duties. Governors have made the decision to increase spending on staff and enrichment activities to support pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding. They are committed to carrying out checks to gauge how successful this spending is in helping those 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	119382
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426256

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Stanton
Headteacher	Ann Aspden
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2008
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