

Whalley Church of England Primary School

Church Lane, Whalley, Lancashire, BB7 9SY

Inspection dates 18–19 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve the standards they are capable of. This is especially so in writing and mathematics.
- Over time, there has not been enough consistently good teaching to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they should.
- The guidance given to pupils during lessons and in teachers' marking does not help them to improve their work quickly enough.
- Children in the Reception class do not make fast enough progress in writing and mathematics.
- The role of middle leaders has not had a good impact on improving teaching and learning.
- The governing body has not monitored the work of senior leaders effectively in the past or held school leaders to account for pupils' progress.
- Governors are preparing to appoint a permanent headteacher. Plans for the leadership of the school are not yet finalised and this is slowing the pace of improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher is giving clear direction to the work of the school. He is well supported by the assistant headteacher. They are working together effectively in order to bring about the required improvements.
- Pupils say they are well cared for and they feel safe in school.
- The quality of teaching has improved recently, and this is helping to raise pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They enjoy coming to school and this is shown in above average levels of attendance.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons. Some of these observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject leaders and middle leaders, staff, four members of the governing body and with the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors also met with representatives from the local authority and the headteacher of Hippings Methodist School, in Oswaldtwistle, who has supported the school as an associate headteacher.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of documentation that included national assessment data and the school's assessments, the school's own view of its work, reports to the governing body and minutes of their meetings, curriculum information, samples of pupils' work and safeguarding information.
- A meeting was held with the school council. The inspectors listened to pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6. They met with pupils to talk about their work. They spoke informally to pupils around school, at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors talked with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the 48 parental responses received at the time of the inspection from the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- Account was taken of the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Deana Aldred, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Millett

Additional Inspector

Peter Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is low compared with the national average. (The pupil premium funding is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.)
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school provides full time early years provision in a Reception class and a mixed-aged class of Reception children and Year 1 pupils.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides childcare at the start and end of each school day.
- There have been several changes of headteacher since the last inspection. The permanent headteacher, who had been in post for three years, left the school at the end of the summer term 2014.
- For the first half of the autumn term the role of headteacher was carried out jointly by the headteacher of Hippings Methodist Primary School and the permanent assistant headteacher of Whalley Church of England Primary School. Since the beginning the second half of the autumn term the assistant headteacher has been leading the school as acting headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good and so raise achievement, particularly in mathematics and writing, by making sure that:
 - work is hard enough so pupils make more rapid progress and reach a higher standard
 - there is effective checking on the progress pupils are making in their work during lessons, so they are helped to develop the skills and understanding they require
 - the marking policy is consistently applied and helps pupils to improve their work more quickly
 - policies to support teaching, particularly of mathematics and writing, are implemented throughout the school so all have the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - in mathematics, pupils are secure in their understanding of basic number skills, and their skills of calculation and problem solving
 - teaching improves writing skills, such as the use of grammar and punctuation, and provides further opportunities for pupils to apply and develop these.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
 - school leaders, including subject leaders and middle leaders, know how well pupils are doing in their learning and they use this information to secure at least good quality teaching
 - governors have the necessary skills to hold staff fully to account for all aspects of their work
 - the governing body quickly implements a robust plan for school leadership which identifies the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leadership and the governing body.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because leaders and governors have not ensured that the school's previously high levels of performance have been maintained. Achievement fell sharply in the 2013 national Key Stage 2 tests. However, changes were swiftly made to address the decline and in 2014 standards improved with higher than national proportions reaching the expected standard in English and mathematics.
- The existing arrangements for the leadership of the school are having a positive impact on improving all aspects of school performance. The work of the associate headteacher in addressing key issues is being successfully continued by the work of the acting headteacher. He knows the school well, and is providing determined leadership which is making inroads into improving the situation. He is very well supported by the assistant head. They are highly regarded by parents, who recognise the many recent improvements. However, there has not been the time to secure all the necessary improvements required to ensure good achievement.
- The acting headteacher, with the support of the local authority, has put in place training for school leaders, teachers and governors. This is helping them to quickly acquire the skills they need to be fully effective.
- Key school policies are now in place. However, some policies which support teaching and learning, such as the marking policy, are not implemented consistently throughout school. This is contributing to variations in teaching which have not been fully addressed.
- The school relies on the leadership of the headteacher and the assistant headteacher, particularly in raising standards in English and mathematics. Middle leaders and subject leaders have not taken full responsibility for raising achievement within these subjects. This has slowed the pace of improvement. Senior leaders are formulating plans with middle and subject leaders so they take a more prominent role in raising standards in their subjects.
- Leaders are developing systems for routinely checking with teachers the progress that pupils are making, and this is helping to raise standards. Arrangements for checking teachers' performance are now in place, and targets are used by the headteacher to link the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement with pay rises.
- The school, with the support of the local authority, is developing strong links with schools in the local area. These links are helping teachers and school leaders to see best practice and so improve the quality of leadership and the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' spirituality is supported throughout the school. It is celebrated in displays, such as the Pupils' Prayer Tree, and in Acts of Worship. Pupils show high levels of care for each other, and are respectful in their relationships with adults. They demonstrate, in their good behaviour, that they understand the expectations of their school community.
- The curriculum is well organised, for example pupils enjoy learning about cultures and Faiths during multi-cultural weeks and visits to places of worship. Pupils visit a partner school in Blackburn to share Eid celebrations. They support local and international charities. At the time of the inspection pupils were donating Christmas gifts to be distributed to children around the world. All of this is preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain and demonstrates the school's firm commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.
- Pupils talked with inspectors about the increased opportunities they now have to participate in sporting activities. They particularly enjoy the range of clubs available to them, and being able to take part in local competitions. The primary school sport funding is well used by the school as it is encouraging more active and healthy lifestyles.
- The pupil premium funding has helped to improve the standards reached by disadvantaged pupils. However, disadvantaged pupils throughout the school make the same variable progress as their classmates and so their achievement is not consistently good.
- Parents are highly positive about the recent changes within school. Those who spoke with inspectors spoke very highly of the acting headteacher, of 'the massive improvements already'; particularly improved communication between home and school, and parents' confidence in the school to keep children safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors' plan for the leadership of the school is only partly in place. The interim arrangements for the role of headteacher mean that the school is too reliant on the acting headteacher and the assistant head to bring about the required improvements.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has managed the difficulties the school has faced with rigour and

determination. He demonstrates his commitment to ensure that the school improves quickly, so that the pupils of Whalley Church of England Primary School achieve the high standards of which they are capable.

- Governors now know how well their pupils are doing, in comparison with pupils locally and nationally. They show good understanding of data relating to the standards their pupils are capable of reaching. They know that the quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school.
- Governors are developing their role in overseeing the arrangements for the appraisal of teachers. However, these arrangements are not yet rigorous enough to be fully effective.
- Governors know the school's allocation of pupil premium funding and that there have been some improvements in the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Training is helping governors to quickly acquire the skills they need to hold school leaders fully to account. They are reviewing the work of committees and individual governors so that the governing body is strengthened by effective systems for checking on all aspects of the school's performance.
- Under the new leadership governors ensure that safeguarding and child protection requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

is good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They help each other around school and during lessons. They are friendly, polite and respectful towards adults. They are very welcoming to visitors and were eager to share their positive views of school with the inspectors.
- Playtimes are well organised and highly active, with many pupils enjoying the playground equipment and games such as football. Lunchtimes are happy, social occasions. During the inspection pupils clearly enjoyed the healthy lunches prepared for them by school.
- Pupils, parents and staff agree that behaviour is good.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons; they are eager to co-operate and to do well in their work. Even when in some lessons the work given to pupils was too easy or they repeated tasks they had already done. Most were seen to concentrate and to complete the tasks given to them. Some pupils told inspectors they would like to try more difficult work.
- Inspectors saw behaviour that was exemplary when pupils were fully engaged in work that they found interesting and challenging. The few incidents of behaviour observed to be less than good were in lessons where the work pupils were given did not fully capture their interest or challenge them enough.
- Pupils' attendance is high compared with the national average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is now good. It has improved under the leadership of the acting headteacher. The current leadership has created a safe environment.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors said they feel safe and well cared for by all the adults in school. They are particularly appreciative of the support they are given by the learning mentor, who helps them if they have a problem. She now has the time to support pupils on a regular basis. Pupils are confident that any problems are quickly resolved.
- Clear procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' safety and to meet child protection arrangements.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school, and in other situations. Pupils are taught, for example, about road safety and the dangers of drugs and alcohol.
- Pupils who spoke with inspectors showed a good understanding of what bullying is and the forms it can take, including bullying by text messages, and how to stop any incidents from happening. They talked of the teaching that helps them, for example the annual anti-bullying week, and agreed that there is no bullying in their school.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because pupils' progress over time has not been consistently good. This is because leaders have not made sure that teaching is challenging enough to raise pupils' achievement. The associate headteacher, and subsequently the acting headteacher, have taken actions to address underperformance and provide training and support. This has resulted in improved

teaching in the last two terms. However, the improvements are not consistent throughout school.

- In some classes pupils do not make good progress because they are given work they can already do. Pupils did not hesitate to tell inspectors that the work was too easy, often because they were repeating tasks they had done in previous lessons.
- In some lessons there are too few checks on the progress pupils are making, and too little guidance on how they can improve their work. Some teaching ensures pupils are given specific support to extend and develop their skills. For example, in a mathematics lesson, effective questioning throughout the lesson ensured that younger pupils worked diligently to successfully complete calculations. Questions such as 'how do you know?' and 'how can you show that?' encouraged pupils to explain their thinking and this increased their confidence. Pupils selected mathematical resources, such as number lines and hundred squares to help them, whilst others confidently completed calculations using three digit numbers. From the very start of this lesson pupils made good progress.
- However, there is not enough good teaching of mathematics throughout the school. Some pupils are not secure in their use and understanding of number. They are not confident in the strategies they can use, for example in calculations and this is slowing their progress. As a result, overall pupils do not yet make good progress and achieve well in mathematics.
- There is inconsistent application of policies supporting the teaching of writing, and this is evident across classes. In some classes, pupils do not develop specific writing skills and those of grammar and punctuation sufficiently and they have too few opportunities to apply and develop these skills in extended pieces of writing. However, evidence in exercise books shows that some most able pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are working at the higher levels, and have developed confidence in editing and improving their writing. It is evident from the books sampled during the inspection that handwriting is now well taught.
- Some marking gives good guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work and pupils act quickly upon this advice. In other books comments made in the marking are repeated, sometimes over several pieces of work, and there is little evidence that pupils are learning from these as they continue to make the same errors. The marking policy is not yet consistently applied throughout the school and this is slowing pupils' progress.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters represent in words) is good and this is helping younger pupils, particularly in their reading. They confidently blend sounds to read unfamiliar words which helps them to read with increased fluency and enjoyment. Most able pupils read their books with real interest. They enjoy the books provided by school, although they would like to choose new books- especially for the school library. Younger pupils would like to use the library more frequently so they have a wider choice of books.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils all benefit from additional adult support. However, the rate of achievement is variable throughout the school for these pupils as it is for their classmates because the quality of teaching varies.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because, throughout the school, too few pupils make good progress.
- Children join the Reception class with skills that are above those typical for their age. During their time in the early years children do not make good enough progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. Although an above- average proportion of children start in Year 1 with skills higher than those expected for their age, too few children reach these levels considering their good starting points.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have declined since the previous inspection, when they were above those reached by pupils nationally. The standards pupils reach at the end of Key Stage 1 are now broadly in line with pupils nationally. In 2014 too few pupils reached the higher levels of which they are capable, particularly in mathematics.
- In the most recent national screening check at the end of Year 1 on pupils' knowledge of phonics, most pupils reached the expected level. There has been a strong trend of improvement over the past three years. However, expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading, writing and mathematics are inconsistent across classes and overall remain too low.
- In lessons where expectations in teaching are high the most able pupils were seen to make at least good progress, and to enjoy the challenges set for them. Most able pupils who spoke with inspectors talked of how much they enjoy being challenged because it makes learning fun. For example most able pupils, in a mathematics lesson, clearly demonstrated their abilities using mental calculations to estimate answers and using mathematical jottings to support them as they successfully worked their way through a problem solving task. However, such good level of challenge is not consistent across the school.

- Standards reached in 2014 in the end of Year 6 national tests were similar to those achieved by pupils nationally in mathematics. This represents a decline in standards since the previous inspection. In reading and writing the standards pupils reached were above the national average. However, although pupils made expected progress from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2, too few made good progress and so did not attain the higher levels of which they were capable, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- School data shows pupils in Year 6 to be on track to attain higher standards this year, with more pupils than previously making good progress. However, there are variations in the progress that pupils are making throughout school and this is linked to the variance in the quality of teaching.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is small so the school tracks their performance as individuals. Pupils receive extra help, and in lessons were seen to be secure in their understanding of what was expected in the tasks they were completing.
- It is not possible to measure accurately any gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally as the proportions of disadvantaged pupils are so small. Within school, disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is becoming more accountable for the progress made by their pupils in order to ensure that everyone has an equal chance of success.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because too few children are making at least good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. Children make slower progress in learning to write independently and in their understanding and use of numbers to 20. The school has identified this and is now working to improve teaching in these areas.
- Children's learning is assessed accurately and there are good systems in place to share this information with parents and carers. However, the information has not been used effectively to adapt teaching so that all children make at least good progress.
- Children with special educational needs are well supported, and secure in their learning.
- Safeguarding requirements are fully met. The learning environment is well managed.
- The creative curriculum provides children with interesting activities that encourage curiosity, both indoors and outdoors. However, the school recognises that the outdoor environment is less well resourced and not easily accessible for children from the two classes.
- There is good communication with parents, and this helps children to settle quickly. In their good behaviour children show that they feel safe, and know what is expected of them.

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	119429
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	449288

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Borland
Headteacher	Richard Blackburn
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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