

Boundary Primary School

Dinmore Avenue, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY3 7RW

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
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

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good. As a result, too few pupils reach the standards they are capable of in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils do not always make enough progress because teachers do not give work to them that matches their abilities; some children find work too hard while others find it too easy.
- The school's curriculum does not give adequate opportunity for pupils to develop and deepen their skills and knowledge in a full range of subjects.
- Pupils' learning is hampered in mathematics because they do not have enough opportunities to solve problems or carry out investigations that deepen their understanding.
- Middle leaders are not sufficiently involved in the checking of the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths in modern Britain and the wider world is not sufficiently developed.
- Pupils' low-level disruptive behaviour in a small number of classes hinders learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Leader's self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is accurate and is enabling them to plan the appropriate steps for improvement.
- Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well and, as a result, make good progress.
- Pupils are happy and enjoy school. They are kept safe and are very well cared for.
- Partnerships with parents are strong and well developed.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class of the school. In addition, inspectors made a number of shorter visits to lessons and activities.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of staff, newly qualified teachers, four representatives of the governing body and a representative of Blackpool local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the school day and observed them during playtime, lunch and before and after school. They also met formally with two small groups of pupils as well as the school council.
- Inspectors heard a number of children read.
- Inspectors took note of displays around the school.
- The school’s tracking of pupils progress was examined alongside the work in pupils’ books.
- Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents at the start and end of the school day. They also took account of the 13 responses on Parent View (the online questionnaire) to inform the inspection.

Inspection team

Martin Bell, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

John Ellwood

Additional Inspector

Heather Simpson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- There is an on-site breakfast club and after-school provision that runs alongside after-school clubs
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, while the proportion of pupils for whom English is not or believed not to be their first language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school has two Special Educational Resource Facilities for pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Since the last inspection there has been substantial staff turnover, including the appointment of an acting headteacher in February 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is at least good by:
 - making sure that the work given to pupils is set at the right level, building upon what they already know
 - developing teachers' skills so that they are able to use questioning to probe pupils' understanding, ignite their imagination and deepen their thinking
 - improving the quality of feedback, in line with the school policy, so that pupils are better able to know what to do to make their work better.
- Raise pupils achievement by:
 - ensuring pupils develop their mathematical skills by providing them with more opportunities to solve problems and undertake investigations
 - making sure that pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills, deepen their understanding and broaden their knowledge across all areas of the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the capacity for middle leaders to frequently check on the quality of teaching throughout the school and consequently play a greater role in school improvement
 - broadening the curriculum so that it gives pupils the opportunity to foster their understanding and appreciation for a diverse range of cultures.

An external review of governance should be undertaken so that this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The acting headteacher has been persistent in driving improvement despite substantial staffing changes since her appointment. Actions, particularly those taken since September, are beginning to make a difference to the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making. These improvements, however, are at an early stage and their impact is not yet consistently being seen across the whole school.
- The curriculum at the school is not sufficiently broad or balanced as there is an over emphasis on developing writing. Pupils in some classes are not given enough opportunities to develop skills and expand their knowledge in subjects such as geography, history or music. Nevertheless, the school promotes pupils' social and moral development well. Special assemblies, such as the one during inspection led by a local magistrate, for instance, help pupils to understand the judicial system and the British values of law and order. Prefects undertake their roles seriously and are proud to be role models of tolerance and respect. Pupils, however, display a lack of knowledge or understanding of different cultures and faiths as they are not taught about these often enough or in sufficient depth.
- Pupil premium funding spending supports disadvantaged pupils in a range of ways, including by employing specialist pastoral staff to help pupils with social and emotional difficulties and the purchasing of resources that support learning in the classroom. In the past, spending of this funding has not always been as effective as it could be. However, it is now beginning to make a difference and disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in most classes. Governors have instigated an external review of how pupil premium funding is being spent to see if they can further improve its impact. This is indicative of leaders' commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Specialist sports coaches have been employed using the primary physical education and sports funding. They have taught alongside teachers in school to enhance their skills and pupils have benefited from expert coaching in a range of sports. The provision of extra-curricular activities, such as a mixed football club, has resulted in greater participation rates, particularly for girls.
- The acting headteacher has overhauled the system to check and manage teachers' performance. Teachers are now held to greater account for the progress of their pupils during meetings with senior leaders. As a result the quality of teaching is improving. Some targets set for teachers, however, are not aspirational enough and do not help to raise the achievement of some groups of pupils.
- Senior leaders accurately and frequently track how well pupils, including those who attend an alternative provision, are doing in reading, writing and mathematics. They use this information to identify pupils who are not making enough progress and ensure that they receive the support that they need.
- Senior leaders have sought out expert support to deliver training to staff to help them improve the quality of their teaching. A number of consultants, including a National Leader in Education, have worked with teachers and support staff to improve the quality of marking and feedback, the teaching of mathematics and the provision for children in early years. Improvements are at the early stages and are not yet impacting equally well across the whole school.
- Middle leaders, particularly those responsible for English and mathematics, have supported senior leaders to introduce considerable changes throughout the school that have started to impact positively on the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils. Their role is developing and they have not yet fully been able to monitor the effectiveness of the impact of their actions by checking frequently on the quality of teaching across the school.
- The local authority has stepped up its involvement with the school since October 2014. It has brokered support, for instance through a National Leader of Education, and is now providing a greater level of challenge.
- Senior leaders ensure that partnerships with parents are strong and well developed. Parents speak with a sense of purpose and pride about how they visit the school each week to volunteer to improve the school grounds, for instance by recently painting a fence. These close links, which have been carefully fostered by all staff, have been recognised through the school being awarded the 'Leading Parent Partnership Award'.
- The acting headteacher and senior leaders gather a range of evidence that ensures that they have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their plan for improvement is currently being developed so that targets related to pupils' progress are challenging and measurable.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors recognise that in the past they have not been as diligent as they should have been in keeping a check on how well the school was performing. This year, however, with the addition of new members and a renewed sense of urgency, they are now holding senior leaders of the school fully to

account.

- Governors analyse information about the achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching and ask searching questions of leaders that are beginning to influence and drive school improvement. They have a good overview of the system for teachers' performance management and support and challenge the acting headteacher's decisions about rewarding good performance and tackling underperformance.
- As a result of their desire to do better, governors have instigated an external review of pupil premium funding to explore how the school can improve the effectiveness of how the school currently spends this money.
- The governors meet their statutory responsibilities and have managed school finances well. They are particularly vigilant in keeping pupils safe and ensure that all staff are well trained in this area.
- The governing body helps to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils, for instance, by robustly checking that looked-after pupils receive the support and guidance that they require to thrive in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Some pupils cause low-level disruption in lessons by taking longer than they should to begin listening to their teacher or to follow instructions.
- Pupils switch off from their learning, talk amongst each other or do not fully listen to the teacher in lessons that do not catch their interest or when work is too easy or too hard.
- Pupils and staff say that behaviour has improved since September. Expectations are higher and pupils are aware of the clear system for rewards and sanctions. Pupils talk positively about aspects of the school behaviour system such as 'walk and talk' that gives them an opportunity to express their feelings and sort out their behaviour problems with an adult.
- Pupils confirm that they are developing increasing confidence to resolve their own problems on the playground; they speak proudly of how they are now able to deal with any 'bickering' amongst themselves without the need to involve teachers.
- Pupils' attitudes towards one another are polite and respectful. Children are proud of their school and engage visitors with a warm welcome.
- Pupils' attendance is below average having not improved at the same rate as other schools nationally in 2014. However, the school is taking effective action to tackle absence through its employment of two family engagement officers, for example, who works closely with pupils and families.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils confirm that staff are friendly and that there is always someone to talk to. One pupil commented, 'You don't need to sit at home worrying and not wanting to come to school because someone will always be there to sort out your problems.'
- Pupils are taught the skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. The school council recently worked alongside the police to stop and speak to motorists outside of the school in an effort to improve road safety.
- Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying and say that bullying at school is rare and when it does occur staff deal with it quickly and fairly.
- Pastoral workers, including family engagement officers and counsellors, provide valuable social and emotional support to pupils and their families.
- The school has robust procedures and checks in place to ensure that pupils who attend an off-site provision and those in school are safe, and well behaved.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good and over time has not sufficiently helped pupils to make the gains in their learning that they are capable of.
- Pupils' learning falters where teachers do not effectively take in to account what pupils have learnt previously to set work at the right level. As a result, in some lessons, pupils find work too hard while in

others pupils find the work too easy. Furthermore, overly repetitive work seen in some classes means that pupils' learning stagnates and their thirst for knowledge is dulled.

- The quality of teachers' questioning across the school is variable. Where it requires improvement, teachers fail to use questions that require pupils to explain or deepen their thinking, probe their understanding or ignite their imagination. Some teachers, however, are making better use of questioning to enhance learning. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 6, pupils were asked to explain their strategies to find 90% of different amounts, which enabled them to rapidly calculate percentage problems during a fun game of bingo.
- Teachers in some classes do not help pupils to become fluent mathematicians as they are not providing enough opportunities for them to use the skills they have learnt to solve problems or explore investigations. In one class, for example, pupils who were able to solve subtraction questions with ease were given monotonous worksheets to complete that did not build on their knowledge or deepen understanding.
- Some teachers marking and feedback to pupils does not reflect fully the school's policy and recent focus on improving this area. Consequently, it does not help pupils to understand what they need to do further to improve some work. Nonetheless, changes introduced by senior leaders, such as pupils' assessment of each other's work, are beginning to help them to improve, particularly in writing.
- The quality of pupils' writing soars in classes where teachers deliver exciting lessons that involve all pupils. For instance, in Year 5, pupils were enthralled by the class teacher answering questions in role as 'The Grand High Witch' from Roald Dahl's *The Witches*. As a result pupils were motivated to write character descriptions of a high quality. Teachers in Year 3 and Year 4 use carefully chosen novels to inspire their pupils; consequently, the quality of writing is improving quickly in these classes.
- Teachers throughout the school encourage good attitudes towards reading. Pupils take reading books home regularly and the school encourages and supports parents to read with their children. The improved teaching of phonics, the sounds letters make, means that pupils are able to use their skills to tackle tricky words with success. Weekly visits by an author to Years 5 and 6, primarily to support the most able in writing, also helps inspire pupils to read.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because not enough pupils make the progress required to reach or surpass the standards expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Key Stage 2. In 2014 pupils left the school almost two and a half terms behind their peers nationally in mathematics and reading and two terms behind in writing.
- The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1 has improved over the past three years so that pupils are now better prepared to move into Key Stage 2, particularly in reading, where standards have improved most significantly and are now close to those seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1 is below that seen nationally. However, the school uses information from the check to identify and effectively support pupils to reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2.
- School data and work seen in pupils' books confirms that achievement across the school is improving. The many opportunities that pupils are getting to write and improve their skills have resulted in progress in some classes being twice as much as that expected. Progress in mathematics and reading is slower but nonetheless is now starting to make inroads into closing the gaps between these pupils and others nationally.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils at Key Stage 1 has improved so that they now reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are in line with other pupils in the school. The gap to other pupils nationally has also narrowed and is now half of that seen in 2013 across all subjects. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils at Key Stage 2 is at least in line with other pupils in the school. However, the standards this group of pupils reach by the time they leave the school result in them being two and a half terms behind other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The most able pupils generally make expected progress in reading and writing with a higher proportion making better than expected progress in mathematics. The proportion of pupils, however, who reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school is significantly below that seen nationally.
- Pupils known to have special educational needs, including those pupils in the school's resource based provision and those who attend provision off the school premises, make good progress, appropriate to their abilities because of the skilled support that they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.

- Looked-after children make good progress due to the high priority that leaders and teachers place on this group of pupils.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children do not always make the progress they are capable of in early years because assessments carried out by staff are not always accurate and the quality of adult-led activities is not consistently good and does not always hold children's attention.
- Children join school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age, especially in writing, mathematics and understanding of the world. Most children make steady progress as they move through the early years resulting in the proportion who reach a good level of development being broadly similar to that seen nationally.
- Children make gains in their learning when teachers plan exciting and imaginative activities that build on their skills. For instance activities linked to *'The Naughty Bus'* book, that the class had been reading, engaged all children, especially the boys who enjoyed building a town with bricks.
- Children have good attitudes to learning, behave well and get along with each other because of clear routines and good relationships fostered by all adults. Children are kept safe and are sensibly supervised without restricting their imagination. For instance, children who wanted to 'rescue a cat' from the tree in the outdoor area were encouraged and helped to do this safely. Healthy eating and independence is promoted effectively by the well organised snack time routine.
- Leaders' actions, including enlisting expert support from another school, have ensured that there have been significant and rapid improvements in teaching and children's achievement in the early years since September 2014. Positive relationships are built with parents and they are kept informed of how well their children are doing through weekly invitations to visit the classroom.

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	133291
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	456178

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Briscoe
Headteacher	Christina Maddison-Muchlinski
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2012
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