

St Ann's Church of England Primary School

View Road, Rainhill, Prescot, Merseyside, L35 0LQ

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils make consistently excellent progress in every year group. Standards are significantly above average across the school.
- The quality of teaching has continued to improve and is now outstanding.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a first-rate start to children's education; as a result, they are already highly motivated learners by the time they join Key Stage 1.
- Their enthusiasm does not flag throughout the years that follow. The school's lively, rich curriculum engages pupils' interests fully and they are often seen to be deeply absorbed in their learning activities in lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they are considerate, friendly and polite. They feel very safe and secure in school and parents express great confidence in the care the school provides for their children.
- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. She has created an extremely strong team. Staff morale is high and everyone shares her high expectations and ambitions for the pupils and the school.
- Very effective senior and middle leaders help to drive forward the school's programme of on-going improvements.
- Leaders make regular checks on teaching, providing excellent guidance and practical advice; this has helped to raise the overall quality of teaching from good to outstanding.
- Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully and regularly. This ensures that every pupil is provided with levels of support or challenge that are closely matched to their individual needs.
- Information about pupils' progress is shared with governors and staff each half term. Summary reports are very detailed and this sometimes means that the 'big picture' is not always presented as clearly as it might be.
- Governors are very effective and are actively involved in all aspects of the school's life. They keep a careful check on how well pupils are achieving in both their academic and their personal development.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed twenty-one lessons; four of the lesson observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. They listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6 and discussed with them the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading.
- The inspectors met with five members of the governing body, with senior and middle leaders, with the school's pastoral manager and with a group of pupils; an inspector also held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account 69 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). An inspector also met with a group of parents to hear their views about the school.
- The inspectors took into account the views that staff expressed in the questionnaires they completed.
- The inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at the written work in pupils' books and also reviewed a wide range of documentation, including safeguarding documents, the school development plan, records of pupils' attainment and progress, and documents related to pupils' behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Diane Auton, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Anthony Buckley	Additional Inspector
Maureen Coleman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most other primary schools.
- Most pupils are White British, with a small proportion from a range of other heritages and backgrounds. Currently, nearly all of the pupils in school speak English as their home language and there are no pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is considerably below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is smaller than that found in most schools. This additional government funding is provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make the summaries of pupils' progress clear and concise in order to share the information they contain more effectively with staff and governors.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most children's skills are at typical levels for their age when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make excellent progress in the Reception class, so that by the end of the year many children exceed the expectations for their age group across all of the areas of learning. All of the children gain extremely positive attitudes to learning, which they take with them as they move up through the school.
- Pupils make excellent progress during Key Stage 1. The proportion who met the expected standard in the Year 1 national screening check of their phonic skills (knowledge of letters and the sounds they make) was well above average in 2012 and even greater in 2013. At the end of Year 2 in 2013 standards were significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represented further improvement on the above average standards of previous years.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have consistently been above average over the period since the school's last inspection. Pupils make excellent progress from their individual starting points; the proportion of pupils in the Key Stage 2 classes who made more than the usually expected rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics during the last school year was above average.
- The school's most-able pupils are achieving increasingly well. At the end of both key stages in 2013 an above average proportion of pupils reached the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics. In the current year, an increasing number of pupils, across all of the year groups, are working at levels above those usually expected for their age in all subjects.
- The school's progress records and the high quality of pupils' work in lessons and in their workbooks show that excellent achievement is being sustained in the current year.
- Across the school, pupils' reading skills are developing very well. Systematic teaching of letters and sounds in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 is giving pupils the tools they need to become proficient readers. Attainment in reading is high by the end of Year 6 and pupils tackle difficult texts with confidence. From a young age pupils read clearly and expressively, showing interest and enjoyment.
- The attainment of the small number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and free school meals was lower than that of the other pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 by about a year. Nonetheless, they had made good progress during Key Stage 2, especially in English; their progress rates were better than the national average in reading and writing and equal to it in mathematics. The school's records for the pupil premium group across the school in the current year show no significant differences between their achievement and that of the other pupils in school. This is the result of the school's careful targeting of pupil premium funding and the positive impact of measures to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs make excellent progress from their individual starting points as a result of the first-rate support and guidance the school provides for them.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is predominantly outstanding and never less than good, leading to outstanding progress.
- Some of the elements in teaching which enable pupils to make excellent progress are:
 - lessons that are extremely well-planned, so that learning moves along briskly and pupils' interest is sustained throughout
 - relevant and purposeful learning, with teachers giving pupils a clear understanding of what they are expected to do and learn and of how the lesson relates to what they have already learned and of what they will be doing next
 - activities that are challenging for pupils, demonstrating teachers' high expectations of what

pupils can achieve

- extremely effective teamwork between teachers and highly-skilled teaching assistants, providing the support that learners of all abilities need to achieve the objective of the lesson.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, outstanding teaching and a lively curriculum enable children to become very effective, happy and confident learners. Children are encouraged to develop their own ideas, to explore different ways of doing things and to solve problems. Reading, writing and number skills are taught exceptionally well, with plentiful opportunities for children to practise and develop these skills in their play activities.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are supported extremely well and are enabled to make excellent progress from their individual starting points. Problems are identified at an early stage so that appropriate actions can be taken; regular and thorough checks are made on pupils' progress and welfare. The school uses a very wide range of additional strategies, including small-group teaching and individual support in the classroom, for those who need extra help.
- Pupils know that the tasks they are given in lessons are achievable so long as they work hard and try their very best. They respond very positively to this challenge. In an outstanding mathematics lesson in Year 4, for example, pupils initially learned how to interpret data in line graphs; by the end of the lesson they had constructed their own graphs and generated questions for each other to answer. This excellent progress was the result of careful checks on how they were doing throughout the lesson by the teacher and the teaching assistant, by questioning which teased out their understanding and by the opportunities they were given to share and test out each other's ideas.
- Teachers mark pupils' work with great care and attention, ensuring that their efforts are praised and celebrated and that they are also given the advice and guidance they need to make improvements. This contributes significantly to their successful learning and progress. Pupils are given 'target time' in which they can respond to marking and correct errors. They are given an accurate understanding of the levels they are working at, of how well they are doing and of the next steps they need to take.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour, courtesy and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Their excellent conduct in lessons is a key factor in their successful learning. They concentrate and apply themselves extremely well, readily share ideas with each other, use resources independently and require only minimal direction in organising themselves in the classroom.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe is outstanding. Pupils feel very secure in school and they are confident that adults are always on hand to help if they have a problem.
- Parents' comments and their responses on Parent View show how highly they value the level of care and safety that the school provides for their children.
- Pupils have an impressive understanding of issues around different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, and how they should be dealt with. They say bullying in school is almost unheard of, but that when pupils occasionally fall out with each other staff always help them to sort matters out quickly. Older pupils are becoming skilled at resolving conflicts; they show a mature understanding of the principles of restorative justice that they have been taught and they try hard to apply them in their relationships with each other.
- Pupils who are potentially vulnerable and those with additional learning, health, social or emotional needs are supported extremely well. The school's 'hands-on' pastoral manager works in partnership with the effective special educational needs co-ordinator and, together, they keep a sharp focus on removing barriers to learning; this is helping pupils to do increasingly well in school.
- The school has established partnerships with a wide range of agencies that support pupils' well-being. Regular training on child protection, safeguarding and related issues is helping to keep staff and governors' skills and knowledge of best practice up to date.

- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are excellent, reflecting the strong partnership between home and school.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's drive and commitment are fundamental to the success of the school. With the help of a very effective leadership group and influential middle leaders, all of whom lead by example, and with governors' support, she has created a strong and united staff team. Everyone shares her high aspirations for the school. The areas for improvement that were identified at the school's last inspection have been tackled decisively and successfully.
- Regular and systematic checks underpin the excellent quality of teaching. Leaders ensure that staff have every opportunity to develop and improve their skills; for example, newly qualified teachers are supported exceptionally effectively by senior staff, enabling them to become confident and skilled professionals. Staff are clearly held to account through the performance management systems, but are also very well supported by a comprehensive programme of professional training and development.
- The school development plan is based on accurate self-evaluation and rigorous analysis; it identifies well-chosen actions to help the school meet the ambitious improvement targets it sets itself.
- The school has continued to develop the very effective assessment practice that was identified at its last inspection. The information gained from regular reviews of pupils' progress is used very well to identify pupils who may need extra support or challenge and to plan the next steps. Information summaries from the reviews are shared with all staff and governors; they are over detailed, however, and this reduces their clarity and makes them less 'user-friendly' than they might otherwise be.
- The broad, rich curriculum helps to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness extremely well. Subjects come together in topics that are interesting and relevant for pupils; many topics include visits to places of interest or visits from expert contributors, such as artists and musicians, all of which add to pupils' strong motivation to learn. Further enrichment comes through residential trips and through a range of well-attended after-school clubs. The school is 'ahead of the game' in its plans for the new 2014 curriculum and has been quick to respond to it, with reviews and amendments to ensure that all of the new requirements are fully met.
- The school uses its primary sport funding effectively to provide specialist coaching and tuition; this also provides on-going training for school staff. Pupils of all ages enjoy good quality sport and physical education activities in lessons and in after-school activities.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are strongly committed to improving and supporting the school. They hold the school to account and ask searching questions of leaders from a well-informed standpoint. They work in focused teams, alongside teaching and support staff, and carry out a very wide range of evaluation and planning activities all through the year; this gives them an exceptionally clear and detailed understanding of all aspects of the school, including pupils' achievement and the quality and impact of teaching. They are fully informed on how the pupil premium funding is spent and the difference it is making to this group of pupils. Governors ensure that performance management systems are thorough and that leaders' and staff targets are linked to pupils' progress and school priorities. They are fully aware of the link between achievement of progress targets and salary progression. They are very effective in making sure that safeguarding policies and procedures are fully in place. A well-planned, on-going programme of refurbishments to the building and site by governors has already brought about significant improvements to the learning environment in school.

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	104800
Local authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	431390

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edward Smith
Headteacher	Rebecca Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2009
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