

Grimsargh St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Preston Road, Grimsargh, Preston, PR2 5SD

Inspection dates 11–12 March 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.

- Achievement is outstanding in this happy and friendly school. Pupils make brisk progress in all classes. They reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The most able succeed exceptionally well and acquire knowledge quickly. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs also make strong progress.
- Teaching is outstanding. Classrooms buzz with excitement and pupils are eager to learn. Teaching challenges pupils and expects the very best. Consequently, pupils give of their best and acquire extremely positive attitudes to learning. They show interest in all that they do and make rapid progress.
- Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school is outstanding. They feel entirely safe in school. Pupils are exceptionally proud of their school and are always willing to take on responsibilities. They work and play together in harmony.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. This has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and achievement. Both have improved since the last inspection.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership and clear vision drive improvement. Everyone pulls together. The commitment of senior and middle leaders makes a telling contribution.
- Methods for checking on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are effective. Leaders skilfully assess the impact of support for the most able pupils so more of them can reach higher levels. In comparison, methods for checking on the effectiveness of support for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are less effective.
- Governors want all pupils to succeed and provide excellent challenge and support.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy a wide range of sport, music and art and love science.
- Parents are highly supportive. One summed it up by saying, 'this is a fabulous school'.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed significant parts of 14 lessons. One of these lessons was observed jointly with the headteacher. Altogether, eight teachers were observed and teaching was seen in all classes. Inspectors looked at pupils’ books to gain evidence about the quality of teaching and pupils’ progress over time and some of this was done together with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their progress in reading and what they like about it.
- Meetings were held with six governors, the headteacher, middle and senior school leaders, a representative of the local authority and with teachers. Informal meetings were held with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence including records of pupils’ progress, the school development plan and records of governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a number of policies including those for child protection and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at 53 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire for parents (Parent View). They spoke to a number of parents as they brought their children to school and looked at parents’ responses to a questionnaire the school had issued.

Inspection team

David Law, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michele Crichton

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Grimsargh St Michael's is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are supported at school action because they are disabled or have special educational needs and a below-average proportion have a statement of special educational needs or are supported at school action plus.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve further the quality of leadership and management by developing methods for checking on the support given to disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and using the information gained to secure even better achievement for this group.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding in line with what is typical at this age. They make outstanding progress, particularly in their personal development, and most enter Year 1 well-above expected levels. Children were enthralled when their favourite puppet 'Hedgy the Hedgehog' showed them how to count backwards although they eagerly pointed out where he went wrong.
- Pupils go on to make outstanding progress across the school and this is seen in pupils' books, school data tracking their progress and in their learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards of attainment are well above average. High attainment at Key Stage 2 has been sustained continuously since the last inspection and reached even higher levels, particularly in writing.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils make outstanding progress in learning to read and write. They are keenly aware of letters and sounds (phonics) and use this skill to help them read with fluency and understanding. Pupils love to write and learn to write at length for different reasons. For example, Year 1 pupils eagerly wrote questions which they sent to the Troll so they could ask him about his life under the bridge and why he wanted to stop the Billy Goats crossing it.
- Pupils also make outstanding progress in learning mathematics at Key Stage 1. For example, in Year 2 pupils tenaciously solved 'tricky problems' when finding one quarter of 'big numbers'.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils make outstanding progress in learning to read. They read avidly and frequently both at home and in school. Pupils become adept at 'reading between the lines' and can talk confidently about characters and plots. Pupils are skilful writers and produce lengthy pieces in different styles. They learn to select words carefully for effect and successfully acquire a firm grasp of spelling, grammar and punctuation because this is so well taught.
- Key Stage 2 pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics and make outstanding progress because learning is planned exceptionally well. They successfully learn how to solve problems and confidently recall key number facts. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils made rapid progress in learning multiplication because they knew their times tables.
- All groups of pupil make outstanding progress. The school is particularly effective in helping the most able to succeed because they are continuously challenged to think, explain their ideas and solve problems. For example, in 2013 twice as many pupils attained the higher level in writing at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 than is seen nationally. By the end of Year 6, a significant proportion of pupils reach the higher level in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs frequently make outstanding progress because of the excellent support they get from teaching assistants. For example, in Year 4 one group made brisk progress because the teaching assistant skilfully helped them to understand multiplication methods. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.
- Pupil premium funding has had a powerful impact in the last three years. Pupils eligible for free school meals make the same outstanding progress as those who are not eligible. The attainment of eligible pupils is well above that of similar pupils nationally in both English and mathematics, being ahead by one year. In the school, the gap between eligible pupils and those who are not has narrowed consistently for three years and now there is no gap.
- School leaders foster good relations, tackle discrimination and provide an equal opportunity for all groups of pupils to learn exceptionally well.
- Pupils love sport, music, science and art and succeed well in these subjects. Pupils' excellent achievement across a range of subjects, and their outstanding progress from their individual starting points, prepares them exceedingly well for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding and promotes pupils' excellent progress across the school because

expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and challenging. Pupils learn very well as they are stretched and fully engaged. Pupils' books and school leaders' checks on the quality of teaching show that it is outstanding over time.

- Pupils say teachers are helpful, happy and friendly and one summed it up by saying 'every lesson has something good'. Relationships in all classes are warm and friendly, behaviour is managed extremely well and consequently, pupils can focus firmly on learning to make rapid progress. Pupils are encouraged to think about the effect of their behaviour on others. Opportunities, for example for pupils to work together, promote their social and moral development extremely well.
- Pupils are eager to learn. Challenging activities are highly motivating and pupils' attitudes to learning are exceptionally positive. For example, they strive to do their best, listen carefully and concentrate when required.
- Pupils learn to read and write exceedingly well. For example, in English pupils are set high standards which they work hard to reach. In one Year 6 lesson, challenging questions about the novel pupils were reading enabled them to identify and explain how the author was using vivid vocabulary for effect.
- Learning in mathematics is stimulating which underpins the excellent progress pupils make in being able to manipulate numbers and solve problems. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils used the technology of a roaming 'bee robot' to gain a firm grasp of positions and turning.
- Careful planning ensures the range of pupils' needs is met. Consequently, different groups of pupils make brisk progress. The most able are successfully challenged because work is pitched at the right level to meet their needs and questions make them think. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support various groups and are particularly successful in supporting pupils with special educational needs to progress quickly in lessons. Although school leaders are adept at checking the impact of support for the most able, such strategies are not yet as well developed for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Outstanding learning takes place across a range of subjects. Specialist teaching and learning in sport are raising pupils' performance. Learning in science is excellent. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils became engrossed in finding out about the movement of the earth and moon relative to the sun and excellent questioning led pupils to a firm understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. All members of staff and governors want the very best for pupils and are successful in creating a happy and pleasant place for pupils to be. Pupils respond to this exceptionally caring ethos by showing great pride in their school and trying their best to succeed.
- There have been no exclusions. In lessons, pupils are enthusiastic learners who show high levels of interest and are prepared, for example, to organise themselves and work together with others. Around school, pupils are polite and friendly to each other, to staff and to visitors. Pupils love to be helpful and are always willing to take on responsibilities, sometimes by assuming important jobs as school councillors or playground helpers, and at other times by cheerfully tidying up the classroom or giving out books.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils feel completely safe in school. Parents say their children are kept safe. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe because the school teaches them about this feature. Bullying is extremely rare and pupils feel free of it or from any form of harassment. The school's excellent programme of personal and social education helps pupils to acquire a firm understanding of different types of bullying and how to deal with it. As one pupil said 'it isn't big to make others feel small'.
- Attendance is well above average. Pupils are keen to get into school in the morning and into lessons after break-time. There are highly effective methods to encourage good attendance.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher leads the school with an unflagging determination to achieve the best teaching and learning for all pupils. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and all middle leaders. Everyone works unstintingly to improve the performance of the school.
- The impact of this highly effective leadership is seen in the improvements to teaching made since the last inspection. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and more children now reach or exceed expectations by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching has improved from good to outstanding and this better teaching throughout the school has led to rising attainment at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The appraisal of teachers' work is carried out assiduously. Pay awards are merited and relevant further training is provided. Leaders have implemented an excellent system where teachers can visit each other's classrooms and share best practice. This is augmented by coaching methods whereby teachers challenge and support each other to improve. The result is that teaching continues to improve and pupils receive a consistently excellent experience across all classes.
- Leaders and governors use highly effective methods to check on the quality of teaching and track the progress of pupils. This has had significant impact on raising achievement for the most able pupils because leaders have successfully found out which approaches to learning work well for this group and have developed practice accordingly. Methods for checking and analysing the impact of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are not as well developed. Leaders recognise this issue and already have plans to improve things.
- Leaders and governors are successful in providing a rich and stimulating education for pupils. Pupils are enthused by an extensive range of visits, visitors to the school such as authors and artists, and exciting activities such as science week. During science week, for example, Year 6 pupils carefully worked out how to drop fragile cargo from a model aircraft flying at an altitude of one metre and Year 4 pupils made cardboard musical instruments.
- Leaders and governors actively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and do this to great effect. Pupils receive merit awards for their helpfulness to others, comfort each other on the 'friendship bench' and devise ways to raise money for charity.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to close the gap between this group and ineligible pupils, for example, to provide additional support from teaching assistants. Primary School Sport Funding is used effectively to increase levels of participation. Leaders and governors have appointed a 'sports apprentice' who provides additional activities; pupils thoroughly enjoy these and parents commented on how popular they are.
- Leaders and governors are very appreciative of the support provided by the local authority, for example, from the school improvement adviser. This contributes to the success of the school.
- Leaders and governors encourage pupils to reach their goals; for example, one Reception class child is already aspiring to be a famous scientist and drew a lovely picture of himself conducting an experiment. Leaders have successfully developed a school where pupils can flourish in their personal development and acquire a love of learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed to the school. They challenge the school to improve and make sure there is support to make it happen. They visit the school, talk to pupils, get into classrooms and so know about the quality of teaching. They talk to school leaders so have a firm grasp of how well the school performs. The headteacher keeps governors well informed. Governors regularly scrutinise data on pupils' achievement. They make sure the performance of staff, including the headteacher, is appraised and that pay awards are merited. They manage the budget efficiently and make sure pupil premium money is used well. Governors make sure safeguarding requirements are met.

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	119565
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	439631

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tessa Fryer
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Ward
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2009
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