

Mellor St Mary Church of England Primary School

Brundhurst Fold, Mellor, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB2 7JL

Inspection dates

3–4 December 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make at least good progress in all classes throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, they achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average.
- Teaching is always at least good. Staff know pupils well and have high expectations. They plan work that stimulates and engages pupils in their learning.
- Each pupils' progress is carefully checked and any slower progress is quickly and effectively addressed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support the learning of disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils so that they make good progress.
- Children get a good start to their learning in the Reception class.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and are very proud of their school. They get on extremely well with one another, and there are excellent relationships between pupils and staff.
- Pupils feel completely safe in school, and are cared for very well. They say that bullying is extremely rare and that currently there is none in their school.
- The curriculum is varied and well balanced, and engages pupils very effectively in their learning. There is a wide range of enrichment activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school is well led and managed. School leaders, including governors, have a clear view of how well the school is performing and where it can do better. They have worked well together to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Parents are very appreciative and strongly supportive of the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, particularly for the most able. They are not always given work that is hard enough to enable them to make the best possible progress and reach the highest standards.
- There are limited opportunities for staff to improve their own practice, for example, by observing outstanding practitioners.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons taught by eight teachers, including one observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also visited a school assembly.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the early years coordinator, the special educational needs coordinator and with five governors, including the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. The inspector also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector met a group of pupils to discuss their views of the school and spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and during break and lunchtimes.
- The inspector looked at the work pupils were doing in lessons and in their books over time. He listened to pupils read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- The inspector observed the work of the school and examined a number of documents. These included data concerning pupils' current achievement, development plans and arrangements to check the performance of staff. The inspector also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Minutes of governing body meetings and the school adviser's reports were also considered.
- The inspector took account of 29 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire. He also considered 13 responses to the questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.

Inspection team

Robert Birtwell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in seven single year classes from the Reception Year to Year 6 in the morning and five mixed year group classes on most afternoons.
- A large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well below average. These are pupils supported by the pupil premium which is funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well below average.
- 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that more pupils, particularly the most able pupils, make better than expected progress by ensuring that:
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high enough
 - the work set is always hard enough so that pupils are challenged to make the best possible progress and achieve the highest standards
 - staff have more opportunities to enhance their skills and improve their own practice by, for example, observing outstanding practitioners.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides purposeful and effective leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher, staff and governors. They have all responded well to the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection. Their actions have led to improvements in the quality of teaching and raised pupils' achievement, especially in writing.
- The school is a very calm, orderly and happy community. There is a strong and clear ethos that is shared by all staff, and they work closely to support each other. All staff successfully take on responsibilities and are committed to obtaining the best outcomes for each pupil.
- There are robust systems for checking how well pupils are doing. School leaders at all levels make good use of information about pupils' achievement and progress. They have a clear and accurate view of how well the school is performing, and where it could do better. For example, leaders are aware that the most able pupils could make more rapid progress, and there are now plans in place to address this. Improvement planning is clearly focused on improving teaching in order to further raise achievement.
- School leaders, including middle leaders, closely monitor the quality of teaching and learning, and effectively check and evaluate pupils' performance. Any slower progress or underachievement is addressed by providing pupils with extra help if they need it. As a result, all groups of pupils in the school are making good progress. This shows the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- Information about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress is used effectively by school leaders to check how well teachers are performing and to identify where further training or support is needed. It is also used when making recommendations about teachers' pay.
- Staff work well to share best practice within the school, but there are too few opportunities for them to observe and share outstanding practice.
- The curriculum is broad, varied and well balanced. It engages pupils very effectively in their learning and promotes excellent behaviour. It is enriched by a good range of activities, clubs, trips and visits covering sport, music, drama and culture. Year 6 pupils were very enthusiastic about an outdoor activities residential visit they had recently been on, and others had enjoyed performing in Blackburn cathedral.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are kind, considerate, responsible and reflective. There are very strong links with the local church and community and the school works well to raise pupils' awareness and understanding of the wider world. For example, children from Belarus have visited the school regularly. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Procedures for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and are effective.
- The school is using the additional primary school sports funding successfully. Specialist coaches take lessons, run activities and train staff, and pupils participate in a range of competitions through the local sports partnership. As a result, more pupils are involved in a wider range of sporting activities and this is having a positive impact on their well-being and lifestyles.
- The local authority provides light touch but effective support for this successful school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective in meeting its responsibilities. Governors are well informed about how well the school is doing and where it could do still better. This is based on a good knowledge of the use and analysis of data, and a clear understanding of the link between the quality of teaching and pupils' performance. Governors are well aware of how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact it is having on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Governors are ambitious for the school, are pleased with how well it is performing, but not satisfied.
 - Governors are very supportive of the school and visit regularly in a variety of roles. There is an effective committee structure and governors hold the school to account successfully by asking probing questions, and by setting challenging targets as part of the headteacher's appraisal. They have a clear understanding of arrangements to check the performance of staff, and make sure that pupils' achievement is taken into account when making decisions about teachers' pay. Governors undertake regular training to improve their own skills, and ensure that the school's finances are sound. They make sure that all policies, including those relating to safeguarding, are reviewed and updated to meet requirements, and are implemented successfully.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**are outstanding****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are very polite and considerate and get on very well with one another and with adults in the school. This creates an extremely positive climate for learning. There is a very strong and caring ethos throughout the school.
- Pupils are very well motivated and engaged in lessons. They concentrate well, listen attentively to their teachers and try their very best to succeed. They respond very well to questions and challenges and work very effectively both individually and as part of a group. Consequently, lessons run very smoothly and there are no interruptions to learning.
- Pupils say that poor behaviour is extremely rare. The school's records confirm this. There have been no exclusions, racist or discriminatory incidents in recent years and pupils say that 'everyone gets on really well here'. On the very rare occasions that pupils misbehave, the school acts appropriately and effectively, and this ensures there are no repeat incidents.
- The inspector observed outstanding behaviour in lessons, in assembly, around the school and on the playground, and when pupils were preparing for their Christmas concert. Pupils are very proud of their school. They wear their uniforms smartly and are very respectful of the school environment. They enjoy taking on responsibility as eco-councillors or representing the school in sports teams or at conferences, for example.
- Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and attendance is high. No pupils were absent on the first day of the inspection. Pupils enjoy school so much they said, 'the holidays are too long'.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say that they feel extremely safe in school and are cared for very well. They have a very good awareness of how to keep themselves safe in different situations, including personal safety, on roads, when cycling and when using the internet.
- Pupils have a very good knowledge of different forms of bullying, and understand the difference between bullying and falling out. They say that bullying is extremely rare and that there is no bullying in school at the moment. They would report it and are very confident that the school would sort it out very quickly if it occurred.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey think that their child is happy and safe at school, and inspection evidence supports this view.

The quality of teaching**is good**

- The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school, and sometimes outstanding. This was confirmed by evidence gathered during the inspection, including from the work in pupils' books and the school's records of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching over time. This enables pupils in all classes to learn well and make good progress.
- Staff know pupils well and there are very good relationships all round. Staff typically have high expectations and set work that motivates and engages pupils in their learning very effectively. Pupils say that they enjoy learning because 'teachers make lessons fun and interesting' and that 'teachers push us to the standards we should be aiming for'. As a result, pupils are very keen to learn and do well.
- Although staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, they are not always high enough. As a result, the work set is not always challenging enough to result in the most rapid progress for all pupils. Sometimes pupils, particularly the most able, are not given work that is hard enough to enable them to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress.
- Questioning is used effectively to check pupils' knowledge and understanding and to extend their learning. In mathematics, for example, Year 2 pupils were investigating and constructing three-dimensional shapes. They greatly enjoyed selecting the pieces needed to make their shapes and questioning was used very effectively to emphasise key terms and to challenge pupils to move on rapidly to more complex shapes. As a result, pupils had to think hard about what they were doing and made excellent progress.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly consistently and well. Staff use praise effectively and give useful advice about what pupils need to do to improve their work, and it is clear that pupils are increasingly responding to this advice. As a result, pupils say they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to

improve.

- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils who find learning more difficult. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or have special educational needs and enables them to make good progress and achieve well.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They make good progress from their starting points and reach well above average standards. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education and learning.
- Following a good start in the Reception Year, pupils make very good progress in Year 1 and Year 2 because they are well taught. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 because they receive good quality teaching. In 2013, there was a slight dip in performance when standards at the end of Year 6 were well above average in reading, above average in writing and around average in mathematics. Preliminary results for 2014 show that standards were well above average in all three subjects.
- For the past two years, almost all pupils have made the progress expected of them, apart from in mathematics in 2013 and reading in 2014. The proportion that made more progress than expected has been consistently above average in writing, and close to or above average in reading and mathematics.
- Inspection evidence from observing learning in lessons, looking at pupils' work, talking to pupils and examining the school's most recent data, show that all groups of pupils in all year groups are making good progress and achieving well.
- Pupils make very good progress and reach high standards in reading because they read regularly and are well taught. Key Stage 1 pupils have a very secure knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the Year 1 national phonics screening check is well above average.
- Pupils' achievement in writing has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils have many opportunities to write in a variety of styles in different subjects and standards are well above average. The inspector saw examples of powerful writing relating to a biography of Nelson Mandela, for example.
- Pupils have very secure numeracy skills and they can use their mathematical knowledge and understanding effectively to investigate and solve problems in real-life situations.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium in the school. They receive effective support if they need it, and their progress is carefully checked. As a result, they make at least good progress. There are too few disadvantaged pupils in each year group to make a reliable comparison of their attainment and progress with other pupils nationally and within the school.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. Their individual needs are well understood and they receive well-targeted and effective support from teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, they achieve well and progress at least as well as their classmates.
- The most able pupils make good progress. However, they do not progress quite as rapidly as other pupils because the work they are given, although more demanding, is sometimes not challenging enough to enable them to reach the highest levels and make the best possible progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Most children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are generally in line with or above those typical for their age. They make good progress and almost all children reach or exceed a good level of development and are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- The quality of teaching is always at least good. Staff have high expectations and make sure that learning is purposeful and well focused. Children are encouraged to play, explore and work hard on activities that challenge them to develop their skills. As a result, they learn quickly and make good progress in all areas of learning.
- Children behave very well. They are highly motivated and show good attitudes to learning in a very safe and caring environment. They enjoy being challenged by the different learning activities. For example, children greatly enjoyed using balancing scales to compare the weight of different objects and investigate the concept of heavy and light. Staff used questioning very effectively to encourage the children to develop their understanding and skills. The children were also thrilled to practise and rehearse their

contribution to the Christmas concert.

- The early years provision makes a strong contribution to children's physical and emotional health, safety and well-being, as well as to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Staff record and assess children's progress regularly and accurately and use this information to plan activities to challenge them further. The needs of individual children are very well met, including disabled children, those who have special educational needs, those most in need and those for whom the school receives additional funding.
- There are close working relationships with nursery providers and with outside agencies and very strong links with parents. These ensure that children make a smooth transition to the Reception class and are cared for very well.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. Leaders have an accurate view of how well children are doing and what could be improved further.

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	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. 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.

School details

Unique reference number	119424
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	448910

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	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Gill
Headteacher	Christine Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2010
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