

# Dolphinholme Church of England Primary School

Dolphinholme, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA2 9AN

**Inspection dates** 18–19 April 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
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.

- Overall, progress is excellent for pupils of all ability. Attainment when pupils leave Year 6 is high, especially in mathematics.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a very good start in reading, writing and number work. The outdoor space is very small and the experiences available are not as rich as those indoors.
- Teaching overall is outstanding. The focus is always on making lessons interesting and enjoyable. Teachers set work at the correct level for pupils, although on occasions the more able pupils could get to harder work more quickly.
- Visitors are truly welcomed to this school. Pupils are extremely polite and show great respect for each other. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils feel very safe.
- Outstanding promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a substantial contribution to their exceptional personal development.
- Pupils experience a rich and exciting curriculum, and attainment is high in many subjects. Design and technology models made by Year 6 pupils are amazing. A love of nature is nurtured in lessons and by exploration of the beautiful area that surrounds the school.
- Leadership has gone from strength to strength with increased commitment to working as a team. All agree on actions to raise pupils' attainment even higher and changes are applied consistently by all staff. As a result, pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have improved.
- Governors play a full and active role in leading the school forward. They are regular visitors, both formally and informally, and know exactly what is going on regarding both pupils' progress and teaching.
- Parents are very positive about the school. Many activities provided by the school unite the village. Local people support the school in practical ways, as well as sharing their skills and experiences with pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in all classes. She visited nine lessons and parts of lessons.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils' books were scrutinised with a focus on writing in Years 2 and 6.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including the school's plan for future improvement, information about pupils' progress and safeguarding.
- The views of 22 parents were analysed through the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents shared their opinions of the school with the inspector at the start of the day.
- Eleven staff returned the inspection questionnaire and these were analysed by the inspector.

## Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- No pupils are currently from minority ethnic groups.
- The school currently has no pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals). However, the school receives the pupil premium for a very small number of pupils who were known to be eligible for free school meals in the past. This number is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has a new headteacher since the previous inspection.
- The school has achieved several awards including Eco school award, the Activemark and Healthy School status.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently outstanding by:
  - sharing the excellent practice that is in the school with all teachers
  - ensuring that the more able pupils do not have to complete easy work before getting down to work that extends their learning
  - improving resources and the richness of experience outdoors for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Attainment varies, linked to the size and ability of each group. Overall, children start school with skills that are typical for their age. They get off to a good start because of the busy days that are carefully planned in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Expectations of reading, writing and numeracy are especially high and pupils make very good progress in these aspects and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Letters and sounds are taught effectively. Results of the national reading assessment in Year 1 in 2012 were above average and indications are they will increase this year.
- Progress from pupils' individual starting points as they move from Year 1 to Year 6 is excellent. Attainment is above average at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds is extended successfully and pupils use these skills very effectively. Many tackle new words with great confidence.
- Attainment when pupils leave Year 6 is high. This has been the picture for the last three years and data show it is set to continue. Currently, although the group is small, every pupil is well on track to reach above average levels. In mathematics, virtually every pupil is working at very high levels, more in line with pupils well launched into their secondary education.
- These pupils are highly skilled at solving problems and applying different methods of calculation. Writing is often imaginative and exciting to read. Work is neat and spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate.
- Reading is excellent. Pupils enjoy fiction and non-fiction. They apply their skills in other subjects being very skilful at scanning a text for information.
- Attainment is also high in science and other subjects. Pupils use information and communication technology efficiently and displays of art show a high standard.
- Although no pupils are currently known to be eligible for support by the pupil premium the school receives funding for a very small number of pupils who were eligible for free school meals in the past. This is used effectively to enhance spelling and reading skills. These pupils' attainment in mathematics was above average. In English, it was average and extra on-going support narrowed the gap with other pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress, especially linked to their specific difficulties. For example, those who have difficulty with communication or find it hard to sustain concentration receive extra support. They play a full part in lessons in line with the school's very effective promotion of equality of opportunity for all pupils.

### The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching over a period of time enables pupils to learn exceptionally well in a range of subjects. Teaching observed was always at least good and much was excellent. All lessons had outstanding features, especially in the planning of work and making learning interesting for pupils. This results in high levels of commitment to work by all pupils.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, assessment is accurate and ensures children are challenged to extend their skills. The focus is on practical activities and children enjoy making clay pots and planting vegetables. The webcam in the bird box captures the children's enthusiasm for nature. The outdoor space is very small and especially when an adult is not available, learning is not always as effective.
- In all lessons, staff manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well and lessons run smoothly. Vibrant displays celebrate pupils' success and encourage independence by offering prompts that pupils refer to while they work.
- Teachers often inspire their pupils and show excellent subject knowledge. Questions are probing and make pupils think, such as when making a decision about the origins of paper and if it is a

living or non-living material.

- Mathematics is taught most effectively. Daily sessions of mental calculation help pupils to learn very effectively whatever their ability. An allocated time to complete the task leads to sustained concentration. Pupils say this practice gives them confidence in mental calculations.
- Excellent teaching of reading instils an enthusiasm for books. Many lessons include drama and Year 1 pupils' performance showed imaginative, alternative endings to their story. A palpable spiritual ethos was created for the older pupils as they moved around the classroom reviewing poems. Their notes showed not only high comprehension skills but also an understanding of the feelings created by the poet.
- Assessment is used very well to track pupils' progress and to plan future lessons. Tasks are set at the correct level, except on the rare occasion when the more able pupils have to complete easier work before they move onto work that fully extends their learning.
- Support staff are deployed well, especially to make very effective use of the extensive school grounds, for example, when researching habitats. Their support role in lessons has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

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

- The advantage of this small school is everyone knows everyone else. Older pupils are friends with the younger ones and enjoy carrying out a buddy role to offer help when needed. Exemplary behaviour ensures learning is not disrupted. Outside play is boisterous but happy. The majority of pupils are energetic, share resources and organise their own games.
- Pupils say they feel safe because the school provides clear advice about how to care for themselves. They appreciate their parents' involvement in school and the feeling that they belong to the school community. The school has assemblies about child safety, reviews cyber bullying videos and pupils are adamant that bullying does not happen. They agree there is the odd name-calling but that this never refers to a person's background.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. Their aspirations are high because many visitors talk about their careers and the benefits of education. Year 6 pupils are amazing ambassadors and appreciate all that they have experienced. They are looking forward to working on individual projects which they present to others.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is high. Pupils who met the inspector provided a quotation to sum up their school. This is it: 'Everyone knows each other and we are all part of a big family and care and reassure any who need help.'

### **The leadership and management** are outstanding

- Adults are proud to be members of staff and say that the new headteacher has developed a very strong team spirit. They are constantly urged on to raise their performance, but at the same time, the focus on maintaining a happy school has not wavered. The capacity to move forward is excellent.
- Leaders check pupils' progress very thoroughly and use this information to provide support that ensures all make as much progress as possible. Data is used very successfully to identify priorities. Actions are precise and practical. Success can be seen in pupils' improved writing, which was a school focus for improvement, and more pupils now reach above average levels in Key Stage 1.
- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection because the checks made on its quality by leaders and governors are rigorous. Where teaching was seen to require improvement, guidance and support raised the quality. The aim of leaders is now to ensure that all teaching is of outstanding quality. As yet, the characteristics of teaching that is consistently inspirational are not fully shared with other staff.

- Teachers have targets based on pupils' progress and the school's priorities. Staff meet to discuss progress and teachers are expected to explain any lack of progress. Salary rewards are only allocated when targets are achieved.
- The curriculum offers an excellent balance of basic skills and enrichment of arts and physical development. Thorough planning ensures the needs of all are met. Music and singing have improved and add richness to the school. For a small school the opportunities for sport are fantastic, including competitive teams which often win trophies.
- Visits and visitors extend successfully pupils' understanding of other faiths and cultures. The promotion of pupils' spiritual development is very strong. A parent summed up the promotion of social and moral development as 'my child left with great moral values and the best set of friends we could ever have hoped for'.
- Links with the local authority are very effective, especially the provision of advice and training.
- Parents enjoy being part of the school. They appreciate the many social events, including the sheep racing, as well as the high quality education provided.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors are very knowledgeable about the school. They are regular visitors and fully aware of the quality of teaching and how weaker aspects have been eradicated. Data is reviewed and governors have requested a simple tracking system to show pupils' targets and how many are achieving them. Questions are asked about what actions are in place if pupils start to lose ground. The budget is managed effectively, including checks on the impact of the small amount of pupil premium funding. The headteacher is set challenging targets and governors check that any salary awards are linked to teachers attaining their targets. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties, particularly ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119526
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	411745

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Judith Hayhurst
<b>Headteacher</b>	Cathy Winter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 791530
<b>Fax number</b>	01524 791530
<b>Email address</b>	bursar@dolphinholme.lancs.sch.uk



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