

Nelson Whitefield Infant School and Nursery Unit

Norfolk Street, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 7SY

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Inspiring leadership has established a happy, vibrant learning community. The two headteachers work very well together and form a strong, cohesive partnership. Pupils are extremely positive, saying, 'We are really happy' and, 'Everyone has fun'.
- Achievement is outstanding and standards are well above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium, make at least good progress.
- Outstanding teaching provides imaginative and challenging activities that really capture pupils' interest so they are very keen to learn and work hard.
- Staff successfully develop and extend pupils' knowledge of language. Reading is taught well so pupils gain the skills they need for their work in all subjects.
- Excellent behaviour was seen throughout the inspection. Pupils feel very safe, because, 'Teachers take care and look after us'.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors were very supportive. In the school survey one said, 'My child will never take a day off, even when feeling ill'. Parents help with 'Home Learning' and are involved in the life of the school but some are less confident to do so.
- The outstanding curriculum provides exciting, enriching learning opportunities and experiences. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is excellent.
- Rigorous checks on teaching and well-planned professional development underpin a shared ambition to make the school even more successful. The proportion of outstanding teaching has increased and standards have been well above average over time, so there is very strong capacity for yet more improvement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons or part lessons. They visited small-group teaching sessions, observed break-times and lunch-times.
- The team met pupils and staff, members of the governing body and the local authority representative.
- School and national data, procedures for gathering an accurate picture of the school's performance and assessing the quality of teaching and learning, and arrangements for pupils' safeguarding were checked.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' books and their work displayed around the building. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors took account of the recent (Sept 2013) school survey of parent views and spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to show results for analysis.
- Inspectors also considered responses in the 40 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Patricia Cope

Additional Inspector

Kevin Johnson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized nursery and infant school.
- The very great majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government 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 by the local authority) is 17.2% which is below the national average.
- The school has grown considerably since the previous inspection, with three extra classes and temporary classrooms sited in the playground. A new school building is currently under construction.
- There have been significant changes at senior leadership level. The school is now led by two headteachers, an acting deputy head and an acting assistant head. The local authority have used the skills of senior leaders to share good practice and provide support for other schools.
- The school holds a number of awards, including International Schools and has Healthy Schools status.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on and extend the existing very good relations with parents so they are all able to support learning at home and can participate more fully in the life of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children's skills when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage are well below those typical for their age, especially in their language, personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Nearly all speak English as their second language, and many have little or no knowledge of English when they join.
- Skilful teaching and very good care makes children feel very safe, secure and ready for learning. Nursery children learned new words as they chattered happily whilst they swept up the autumn leaves. Reception children wrote about Eid celebrations using photographs of themselves. By the end of Reception class, most children can write at length.
- Progress is excellent. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage children reach the expected levels of development, ready for Year 1, although language skills are still a little behind for some.
- Pupils continue to make excellent progress in Key Stage 1. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is above the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics, and this has been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils' work books and school tracking information shows that pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to sustain these high standards.
- The most-able pupils make rapid progress, and a higher proportion than found nationally reach the higher levels. Additional provision for these pupils includes weekly sessions with an external literacy specialist. The school has been particularly successful in promoting writing for all pupils, sparking their imagination through visits and stimulating topics such as 'Where our wellies take us'.
- Leaders acted swiftly to halt a slight downward trend in mathematics. Placing pupils in ability groups and closely focusing on particular skills has successfully remedied this and more pupils attained the higher level in 2013.
- Reading is taught well. Many children say they read for pleasure and enjoy sharing class books, such as 'The Lonely Beast'. Fewer pupils than found nationally reached the expected level in the 2012 phonics screening check. In response, leaders thoroughly reviewed the way letters and sounds are taught, and there was a marked improvement in 2013. Lessons are very well organised, pupils learn in small groups, recognise letter sounds and know how to 'sound out' or 'break it down' when they meet an unknown word.
- Carefully directed pupil premium funds provide extra support and small group activities, ensuring those eligible progress as well as their classmates. Their attainment exceeds that of similar pupils nationally, and although just over half a term behind their classmates, data shows this gap is rapidly closing.
- Well led and organised provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures support is closely and sensitively directed to their individual needs and abilities. Pupils are fully included and able to progress at the same rate as their classmates.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- 'We do lots of learning', commented one pupil, and pupils said all lessons were their favourites. A particularly effective feature of all lessons is the high quality of relationships between pupils and staff. Almost half of the teaching observed during the inspection was judged to be of an outstanding quality. This matches the school's own monitoring of teaching over time. Senior leaders provide excellent examples of skilled teaching through their own classroom practice.
- Lessons feature very imaginative, well organised and equipped learning activities and they move along at a brisk pace so no learning time is lost. Staff make full use of their excellent subject knowledge to question and challenge their pupils to think hard and learn more.
- The teaching assistants are well informed, very skilful and make a strong and valuable contribution to pupil's learning and progress.

- Bright displays showing good samples of pupils' work celebrate their success and provide very good examples that encourage high aspirations, especially seen in the displays of pupils' writing.
- Teachers check and re-check pupils' understanding during lessons so learning is always successful. Very detailed progress tracking provides clear information so staff plan high-quality activities, closely matched to pupils' abilities.
- Targets are shared with pupils and checked regularly. Older pupils show a mature understanding of how well they are doing, and become more independent learners, discussing their work and checking their targets. Varied 'Home Learning' tasks reinforce and extend classwork effectively and are well supported by parents.
- A clear, easily understood marking code shows pupils how to improve their work, and simple advice written on sticky notes enables teacher and pupil to check if this has been acted on.
- Pupils who may find learning difficult, those who join the school late with little knowledge of English and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable are all very well supported so they are able to progress as well as their classmates

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The school is a calm and happy place. Behaviour in lessons is never less than good and this is a very strong factor in pupils' excellent progress. Behaviour is exemplary as pupils move around the building and when they are playing outside. Their keen attitudes and enthusiasm for everything they do are evident throughout. This supports pupils' good and better progress and excellent personal and social development.
- Pupils are considerate towards each other. They respond very well to staff because they know their views are listened to, they feel cared for, valued and very safe in school. They say bullying is not a problem and would tell staff if they had any worries. They learn how to be safe on the roads, and older pupils are beginning to be aware of being careful when using the internet.
- Consistently applied behaviour management strategies make a very strong contribution to the positive atmosphere in the school. Pupils know there are rules 'to keep everyone safe', and are enthusiastic about earning 'Golden Time' each week for good behaviour and hard work.
- Attendance is average and has improved significantly over the last three years. Determined efforts of leaders, very well managed by the Home School Engagement Officer, include certificates, prizes, texts, contracts and home visits. Pupils are very keen for their class have the highest attendance each week so they win the honour of looking after the fish.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leaders, governors and staff share a highly ambitious view of how good the school can be and are strongly committed to bringing about further improvement. Their highest priority is ensuring all pupils are fully included in all activities, and they ensure equal opportunities for high quality learning for all.
- Staff morale is very high. They know they are fully accountable for ensuring pupils' progress and take every opportunity to improve their skills and knowledge. Very rigorous performance management includes regular, sharply focused checks on the quality of teaching, well supported through extensive professional development and training. Inspection evidence and school monitoring shows this has resulted in teaching that is always good and the proportion judged to be outstanding has risen considerably.
- Succession planning is in place to develop leaders at all levels, particularly as preparations for the new building gather pace. All leaders contribute knowledgeably to creating and evaluating tightly focused action plans for school improvement.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes demonstrate that spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well. Pupils are friendly, helpful and curious to learn more.

- The curriculum is carefully adapted to meet pupils' different needs and provides all basic skills through a stimulating range of exciting experiences so pupils are well equipped for the next steps in their education. The school makes particularly good use of learning outdoors, for example, the local park or the Forest School. Pupils enjoy these visits and they really enrich classroom learning and extend their knowledge of the world around them.
- The new primary sports funding is targeted to provide regular opportunities for physical exercise. Pupils particularly enjoy working with the specialist sports teacher and their weekly session at the local sports centre.
- The school welcomes parents and keeps them well informed through text messages and weekly newsletters. Meetings to discuss their child's progress are held each half term during the afternoon, a convenient time for parents. Many parents help their children with 'Home Learning' but leaders are aware that others are not confident to do so or to become more involved with the school.
- Safeguarding meets all current requirements. Staff have received recent child protection training and policies are regularly reviewed and updated.
- The local authority provides light touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The well informed governors rigorously challenge school leaders about pupil progress and the standards reached. They make full use of data and information from a range of sources to compare the school's performance with others, both locally and nationally.
 - They understand the school's strengths and are well equipped to contribute to school's review of its own performance and plans for on-going improvement. Governors were particularly persistent in their efforts to ensure the site for the new school was made available for building work to start.
 - Governors know how leaders use exacting professional development and performance management strategies to further raise the quality of teaching. They know that these are proving successful, seen in the increasing proportion of teaching judged better than good. They rigorously ensure the outcomes of staff performance reviews are related to rewards for good teaching and used to improve teaching and develop leadership skills at all levels.
 - Finances are managed carefully to support teaching and learning. Governors have ensured that careful use of pupil premium funds has made a positive impact on raising standards for these pupils. They know how sports funding is being used to promote pupils' health and well-being, but it is too early to assess the full impact yet.

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	119179
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	426280

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	S Wilkinson
Headteacher	E Cummins E Mason
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2008
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