

Trinity and St Michael's VA CofE/Methodist Primary School

Out Lane, Croston, Leyland, Lancashire PR26 9HJ

Inspection dates 8–9 March 2016

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Enthusiastic and highly skilled staff ensure that all groups of pupils make outstanding progress. Consequently, pupils leave the school with high levels of academic attainment and are exceptionally well prepared for their secondary education.
- Pupils in early years make outstanding progress from their starting points. They rapidly develop their academic, social and physical skills, because of the quality of teaching they receive from talented and committed teachers and teaching assistants.
- Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas they wish to improve further because of their first-hand knowledge of school life and their incisive questions and challenge to leaders.
- The breadth of the school's curriculum and the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities means that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life in their community and modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils settle quickly to their lessons, and are eager and mature learners who are keen to excel. They conduct themselves well about school. They are welcoming and respectful to adults and are proud of their learning community. Pupils' attitudes, actions and respect for each other exemplify the school's caring ethos. They act maturely in positions of responsibility. The school recognises that it could develop pupils' leadership potential still further.
- Excellent leadership is at the heart of the school's effectiveness. Leaders at all levels share a common vision of excellence and have a resolute focus on continued improvement both in school and beyond, including enhancing middle leaders' opportunities to hone their skills by supporting other schools.
- Pupils feel safe and know how to keep safe in school, in the community, and particularly while online, because of the support and teaching they receive.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the opportunities for middle leaders to enhance their excellent leadership skills through expanding further their involvement in leading school-to-school support in their subjects.
- Enhance further the outstanding personal development of pupils by providing additional opportunities for them to learn and demonstrate leadership skills, such as the management of projects and budgets, to prepare them even better for their futures.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is a driving force for excellence in the school. She has a detailed knowledge of what constitutes high-quality teaching that is shared by her deputy headteacher. They have a dogged determination to ensure that this is reflected in the teaching pupils receive. Senior leaders are fully committed to their high expectations. They quickly spot and challenge any hint of underperformance. Their enthusiasm and support for the development of professional excellence has led to a highly motivated and skilled staff that are eager to innovate so as to have best impact on pupils' learning.
- Leaders at all levels share a common vision that is exemplified in the respect and enthusiasm for learning that is instilled into pupils in all year groups.
- Rigorous monitoring, effective analysis, meticulous record-keeping and detailed reporting mean that leaders have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for further development.
- School development planning is detailed and highly focused on appropriate priorities. Leaders and governors keep plans under continual review to ensure that they are having the intended impact. Leaders take rapid actions to meet the needs of pupils and the community. For example, following the catastrophic flooding that recently hit the village, leaders were quickly able to put into place a plan that ensured the continued education of the youngest members of the village community by providing a safe and appropriate environment in which the toddler group could meet.
- Leaders recognise the importance of school attendance in ensuring pupils' future success. They monitor pupils' attendance rigorously and provide support wherever it is needed, for example by ensuring staff are appropriately trained to support pupils whose attendance may be affected by significant medical needs. Leaders also ensure pupils get off to the best start in school through a detailed induction programme that is individualised in some cases so as to meet identified additional needs. The painstaking actions taken by the school in partnership with families result in high levels of attendance.
- Middle leaders are highly effective and enthusiastic. They have strong subject knowledge, enhanced by effective training and coaching by senior leaders. Middle leaders use this knowledge well to empower and enthuse colleagues. They regularly provide in-school training, and frequently share ideas and learn from each other because of the open, sharing ethos of the school. Middle leaders play an important role in monitoring the quality of teaching in their subjects and in planning and implementing new initiatives. Pupils have, for example, benefited from the use of the school radio station to develop communication and writing skills. Pupils' effective and skilled use of tablet computers allows them to create short videos to support teaching and learning. Additionally, the leader of early years brought about enhancements to the provision in early years that has strongly improved outcomes for boys. Links between middle leaders and governors are well-defined and effective because middle leaders regularly report in detail to the governing body regarding the impact of their actions in their area of responsibility. Some middle leaders use their skills and expertise to support other schools and groups in the locality. Senior leaders and governors recognise the importance these opportunities contribute to enhancing the leadership skills of their own staff and accept the need to broaden middle leaders' involvement in supporting other schools to enhance educational provision more widely.
- The school has a broad and balanced curriculum that is enriched by a wide range of additional opportunities for pupils with interests in sport, creativity and academic study. Physical education (PE) in the school is organised innovatively, which allows pupils who are less athletically focused to fully participate and succeed. As a consequence of this innovation, the school has been invited to participate in a research project on the teaching of sport by the University of Central Lancashire. The curriculum fully promotes equality and fundamental British values, as exemplified by the work done across Key Stage 2 that details key aspects such as democracy, tolerance and the rule of law and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the small amount of pupil premium they receive to good effect, so those pupils who are known to be disadvantaged are given equal opportunities to succeed. Use of the funding has included the provision of access to after-school enrichment opportunities including music lessons that lead to academic qualifications, the provision of additional support from dedicated and skilled teaching assistants and access to additional activities and educational visits. Leaders track the impact of this provision closely to ensure that the funding is having the desired impact on achievement. They regularly report their findings to governors to ensure that they too are well informed.

- School leaders use the additional sport funding grant very effectively to provide both expert tuition for pupils and to develop and sustain teachers' skills to use the sports funding effectively. Specialist coaches help deliver and support the PE curriculum while school staff have received opportunities to undertake additional qualifications in sports training to build coaching capacity for the future. Work with the local sports partnership has increased the school's access to and participation in a wide range of sports competitions, while also providing safety training for the use of bicycles on the road for pupils and the identification of those pupils who have exceptional sporting potential. Two of the school's previous pupils now represent Great Britain at fencing, a sport they first took up in school. As a result of the effective use of the funding and the commitment of staff and volunteers, the school has exceptionally high participation rates in sporting clubs, as nearly all pupils enjoy participating in at least one club.
- The school's relationships with parents and its community are excellent. Parents are kept well informed about the achievement of their children through detailed and regular reports while newsletters, the school website and social media provide up-to-date and interesting information. Close links with the community have been fostered. One governor who is new to the village and school stated that the school 'seemed to pop up everywhere there was a village activity'. The school is really at the heart of village life. Excellent relationships with some neighbours mean they willingly give access to land on which the school runs woodland activities. Consequently, parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and the headteacher and senior leaders in particular.
- This is a welcoming school where pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is excellent. The core values of respect for other faiths, cultures and lifestyles are emphasised and modelled by staff and pupils alike and firmly rooted in its own faith's caring ethos. Leaders take every opportunity to develop pupils' understanding of the variety of cultures in modern Britain while not detracting from their own faith. For example, pupils' participation in a Preston's faith trail ensures that they develop a good understanding of the wide variety of cultures and faiths in modern Britain beyond that which they experience in their own rural community.
- Leaders and governors are vigilant and proactive in ensuring all staff are well trained to keep children safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance of the school is outstanding. Governors, many of whom are foundation governors from the two sponsoring churches, are an intrinsic part of the school family and share with all staff in the school the common vision and passion for educational excellence. Governors have a detailed knowledge of the effectiveness of the school because they visit often to work with staff and pupils. They ask probing and challenging questions of the school's leaders and external quality-assurance professionals.
 - Governors are heavily involved in developing the school's improvement plan and monitoring the impact of leaders' actions. They monitor the school's finances closely and evaluate the impact of the pupil premium grant and additional sport funding.
 - Governors ensure that the school's excellent performance management systems are rigorous and implemented effectively. This results in all staff, including the headteacher, being set challenging objectives including some clearly linked to pupil achievement. Governors are very aware of the links between performance management and pay.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - The governing body ensures that the school meets statutory requirements for safeguarding, including robust systems to check the suitability of all adults who work in the school.
 - Leaders implement and monitor the school's safeguarding policies with rigour. Checks are thorough and complete; all records relating to safeguarding are kept meticulously. Any concerns are acted upon immediately. Staff are very well trained to deal with child protection concerns. They are constantly vigilant and have excellent relationships with partner agencies; consequently, they take swift and appropriate action whenever concerns are raised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teaching over time is outstanding and often inspirational; consequently, pupils of all groups make outstanding progress from their starting points to reach high levels of attainment.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are taught systematically and with high levels of skill and enthusiasm. Teachers' innovative use of technology makes activities real and exciting. They frequently challenge pupils of all groups to complete difficult problem-solving activities, particularly in mathematics. For example, some pupils in Year 6 were asked to calculate the volume of irregular, three-dimensional shapes while others were set problems regarding calculation of the volumes of objects found around the school in video challenges created by their peers. Inspirational teaching enables all pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge in a wide variety of subjects. They are confident and authoritative in presenting this knowledge to pupils while also welcoming questions from pupils and injecting fun into learning. Consequently, children make excellent progress in their learning, which is further reflected in their progress over time. The work set for different groups of pupils across the school is planned in detail and is adapted carefully to make sure it is hard enough for all groups. Consequently, pupils of all groups fully engage in their learning with no loss of focus or concentration.
- All teachers and teaching assistants consistently demonstrate high expectations of all pupils. Teachers frequently use technical language and vocabulary to explain concepts. Consequently, from an early age, pupils learn how to explain their understanding using the correct terminology and they develop an impressive breadth of vocabulary. Examples of this include children in the Year 2 class who can both confidently define and give examples of how to apply different rules to pluralise words depending on their endings. Additionally, pupils in Year 4 were able to discuss confidently the use of similes in starting a sentence to bring added detail and description to their writing.
- All staff use probing questions linked to their strong subject knowledge to good effect. Pupils are commonly asked to explain their thinking or reasoning for answers, which consolidates their understanding, particularly in mathematics, where pupils sometimes take on the role of the teacher to explain their theory and question others about it. Teachers have highly effective relationships with pupils, as a result of which pupils feel confident to take risks and make mistakes from which they learn.
- Pupils read widely and often with confidence and fluency. Pupils who read to inspectors discussed confidently the books they liked and demonstrated a love of reading. Additional links to well-known authors enhance their appreciation of texts and further their desire to write, for example Year 4 pupils shared their work with the author Chris Riddell, as part of a school-initiated project.
- Homework is used well as a tool to help pupils consolidate their learning or to develop new knowledge and skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school and what it provides for them. This pride is shared by parents and demonstrated by the complete agreement of all parents that inspectors spoke with and all respondents to Parent View who stated that they would recommend this school to others. One parent took time to write to inspectors to stress that they 'felt privileged to be able to send their children to the school'.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and look after themselves because of the high-quality teaching they receive. They spoke confidently about keeping safe in the community and demonstrated secure understanding about how to stay safe while online because of the teaching they receive. Regular visitors from outside agencies bring additional excitement and life experiences and help to reinforce teachers' safety messages. For example, visits from the British Transport Police ensure pupils know how to keep safe around the railway running through the village, while a link to Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts North West (RADA) has provided pupils with a workshop in which to challenge gender stereotypes.
- There is a strong emphasis on care in the school that reflects the school's strong Christian ethos. Pupils reflect the caring attitudes of staff in their conduct around the school and its grounds. Older pupils often

carefully look after younger siblings and friends during playtimes and lunchtimes, while older pupils in some clubs, such as chess club, give their time to teach younger members of school about their game.

- Pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, show maturity in the way they undertake roles of responsibility or jobs around school such as school councillor, technical support for school assemblies and the operation of the school's radio station. However, school leaders recognise that pupils are capable of undertaking even more responsibility and plan to enhance the opportunities for pupils to develop further leadership skills, including the management of small budgets, to equip them with skills for later life.
- The school has effective relationships with outside agencies and is proactive in referring any concerns that may place children at risk of harm and following up actions to ensure pupils remain safe.
- The school provides many opportunities for pupils to help develop both academic, artistic and sporting skills through its rich curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities. Clubs include coding club, in which teachers and pupils learn together about the intricacies of controlling computers, and bushcraft club, in which pupils develop their wilderness survival skills in the safety of the neighbouring Harry's Wood. Additionally, residential visits such as the recent visit to a local outdoor education centre promote pupils' self-confidence and resilience. The school makes excellent use of community links, including the neighbouring secondary academy, to provide extra support for the most able. Another example is the work done to develop pupils' creative writing skills through collaboration with the local group from the University of the Third Age (U3A) to produce an annual publication.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- All children behave well in lessons. They demonstrate a desire to learn and reach or exceed the high expectations placed upon them by teachers. They listen with rapt attention and are eager to begin learning as soon as they enter the school, getting quickly to grips with morning learning challenges set by class teachers at the start of the school day.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is exemplary. Pupils are impeccably polite and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. They are keen to engage in conversation and eager to ensure visitors enjoy their visit to the school. One of the youngest pupils was so concerned that an inspector may have been lonely at playtime that they enquired if he would like to play with them and their friends.
- Pupils' attendance is high. Excellent support for pupils with medical needs means that they lose minimal learning time. Parents comment that children do not want to miss school and hurry to get there in the morning. Similarly, children say that they enjoy coming to school to learn and they agree that learning is fun. Children clearly demonstrate pride in their school through the high quality of the presentation of their work in books and classroom displays.
- Pupils spoken with around the school have a good understanding of what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including online bullying and that related to race and gender and how this differs from a falling out with friends. Pupils say that bullying does not happen, while school records show incidents to be extremely rare and that teachers and other staff deal with them quickly and effectively. Pupils stated that there was no homophobic bullying in school because they learn about inclusiveness and tolerance, including that relating to sexuality, as part of their personal, social and health education lessons.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- The outcomes for pupils have improved since the last inspection. All groups, including disadvantaged pupils, make excellent progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national figure. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest standards of attainment in mathematics, reading and writing was nearly twice the national figure. There are no significant gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils.
- The most-able pupils in all year groups receive high levels of challenge in the work set for them. Consequently, they work at and reach levels of attainment in excess of those that are expected for their age. One example of this was the ability of a Year 6 pupil to use metaphorical references confidently in their writing to describe a motor race in which they compared the two cars to a predator and its prey.

- The low numbers of pupils with special educational needs or disability make excellent progress in all subjects from their starting points, because they are well-supported in school through highly-effective strategies, such as one-to-one coaching from highly skilled members of staff.
- The progress made in phonics (the teaching of letters and the sounds they make) by all pupils from their starting points is strong. The proportions of pupils who reach the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check has been consistently above the national average for the last three years and shows an improving trend. Disadvantaged pupils performed similarly to their peers and outperformed other pupils nationally. Current work in pupils' books and school-based tracking confirms that the stronger and more systematic teaching of phonics brought about by additional training for staff continues to improve outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015 was significantly above that seen nationally in all subjects. Work in pupils' books confirms that all groups, including those who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs or disability, continue to make strong progress across the key stage from their different starting points.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Leadership of the early years is outstanding. Leaders ensure children are enthralled with their learning due to the careful planning of the curriculum to provide excellent and interesting opportunities to develop children's knowledge and skills. Staff are highly skilled, well-trained and deployed appropriately to have the best impact on pupils' development. Consequently, children, particularly boys, make first-rate progress from their starting points.
- The majority of children begin the early years with skills and understanding typical of what is expected for their age. However, about a third of each cohort enter with levels of development below that which is typical for their age. In 2015, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the time they had left the early years continued to increase and remained above that seen nationally. The gap in performance between girls and boys that was evident in 2014 has been completely closed because of the outstanding teaching and support they received.
- Staff demonstrate excellent knowledge of up-to-date early years practices. Children's safety and welfare are ensured because leaders and staff are well trained and highly vigilant.
- Children develop great independence and collaborative skills through the excellent opportunities they have to explore and investigate. Recent work themed around the Arctic gave pupils opportunities to become Arctic explorers and write about their adventures, including recounting tales of spotting killer whales and walruses on their journeys across the Arctic wasteland. Children's reading, mathematics and writing skills are developing exceptionally well. This is very effectively shared with parents through home-to-school journals. In some cases, parents' frequent use and familiarity with the journals have resulted in them beginning to follow the school's marking policy in the style of their responses to pupils' work.
- Leaders and staff have developed excellent relationships with parents, which contribute to the outstanding progress pupils make in their learning. Regular contact with home is made through pupils' workbooks, newsletters and electronic communications. Parents say they feel welcomed into school and that all staff are very approachable and willing to listen to and address any concerns.
- Leaders have strong links with local nurseries, but recognise the need to continue to build on these strong relationships and enhance them even further to continue to sustain excellent provision for children attending school.

School details

Unique reference number	131309
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10003869

This inspection 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	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caroline Moon
Headteacher	Mrs Kay Beatty
Telephone number	01772 600379
Website	www.croston-pri.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	bursar@croston-pri.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 May 2011

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Less than one tenth of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disability is well below the national average. However, the numbers of pupils who have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans is well above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The early years is comprised of a single full-time Reception class.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed a range of lessons or parts of lessons and looked at pupils' work. They listened to pupils reading, and talked with pupils about their lessons and school life.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and the local authority's school improvement advisor linked to the school and a representative of the Blackburn Diocese.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' progress and to school management, including the arrangements to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The inspectors spoke with parents and staff and took account of the school's own consultations with parents and other communication that Ofsted received.
- There were no responses to the online staff or pupils' questionnaires.
- Inspectors took account of the 40 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector

Sheila O'Keeffe

Diane Palin

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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