

Singleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Church Road, Singleton, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 8LN

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

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

- Singleton lives up to its school motto, 'Passion for learning, passion for life' in every aspect of its work.
- The exceptional leadership of the headteacher, the staff team and governors has created a climate of high expectations, a love of learning and an insistence on the very best for every pupil.
- Teachers use assessment information with expertise to ensure that they cater for every pupil's learning needs. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive. Many barriers to learning are removed to ensure they make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- The professional development of staff has enabled them to grow into highly skilled practitioners who share a sense of creativity and passion for learning.
- Pupils rise to the teachers' high expectations and benefit from the high-quality teaching they receive throughout the school.
- Pupils are a credit to the school. They make a valuable contribution to its development, and play a central role in ensuring that everyone is welcome and well cared for.
- Behaviour is exemplary and pupils conduct themselves impeccably around the school.
- Pupils typically think school is 'amazing' and feel very safe; parents agree.
- The provision for early years is outstanding. Excellent leadership and teaching create a stimulating learning environment and ensure that children have a first-class start to school life.
- Although outcomes are outstanding overall, there is still a need to embed improvements made in reading, so that a higher proportion of the most able pupils reach higher standards.
- The quantity of self-evaluation and school development documentation sometimes makes it difficult for governors to assess the impact of actions quickly.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of most-able pupils reaching higher standards in reading by creating more opportunities for them to develop their skills to think more deeply about characters' feelings and intentions, and to interpret the meaning in different texts.
- Sharpen self-evaluation and school development planning documentation, so that governors can assess the impact of actions quickly and easily.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and her unwavering determination to provide the very best for all pupils have resulted in Singleton being outstanding in all areas. Leaders' passion, commitment and strong sense of fun have enthused staff, so that together, they provide excellent opportunities for pupils to be the best they can be.
- The school's Christian values and school motto 'Passion for learning, passion for life' are embodied in everything that the school does. Leaders' promotion of equality and diversity has nurtured pupils who are extremely caring, considerate, respectful and tolerant of each other and the wider community.
- Leaders are highly respected and have the full commitment of staff, parents and pupils. This contributes to the very positive motivation of all staff for continual improvement. Relationships between staff are very strong. Teachers are unanimous in the pride they feel working at Singleton. They feel very well supported and consider that the school is extremely well led and managed.
- Senior leaders know the school very well. The strengths of the school and areas for improvement are identified in the self-evaluation and school development plan. These are detailed and accurate. Occasionally, the volume of documentation results in clarity being lost.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and contributes greatly to the outstanding practice of teachers and excellent outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders are adept at fostering the skills and talents of staff. A strength of the school is the opportunities that staff have to discuss learning and be creative in the way they teach. As a result, leaders have created a culture of enthusiasm and innovation. For example, 'Fantastic Friday' is an opportunity for pupils and teachers to work in different groups across the school in a creative way, bringing together different subjects and offering pupils fun experiences and novel ways of learning.
- The leadership team checks regularly that agreed strategies to secure improvement are being applied by everyone. This has led to a consistency of approach in classrooms. Examples of this are evident in the drive to develop pupils' capacity in areas such as resilience and perseverance. Other examples include using the outdoor environment and the development of pupils' deeper thinking, reasoning and problem-solving skills.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to reduce any barriers to learning that may be experienced by disadvantaged pupils. The progress of pupils supported by this funding is monitored rigorously. The impact of pupil premium funding is evaluated carefully by the headteacher and governors. This enables disadvantaged pupils to be successful and be part of everything the school has to offer.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sports funding is also used well. Teachers have had additional training and pupils have benefited from opportunities to

be involved in a wide range of sporting activities both within the school day and after school.

- The leadership and organisation of special educational needs provision are excellent and additional funding to support eligible pupils is used very effectively. Teachers identify pupils' needs swiftly. They use high-quality resources, ensuring that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities thrive in their academic learning and their personal and social development. Pupils make a significant contribution to ensuring that their peers who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are happy and participate fully in all that the school has to offer.
- The school offers a strong, broad and balanced curriculum that excites pupils and contributes to their enjoyment of learning. Subjects such as science, history, music and art are popular with pupils because they are well taught. Pupils typically explained, 'You learn lots of things you didn't know before.'
- Pupils are offered an exciting range of opportunities, such as attending residential outward-bound courses and visiting places such as the Houses of Parliament. They also benefit from many and varied after-school clubs. Excellent use is made of the school's woodland space where all year groups love to be challenged to solve problems and apply their learning through physical activities.
- The excellent promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means the school provides a calm and very considerate environment where pupils mix happily together. Pupils are actively involved in the school community, a relationship which develops and supports the school's values. Leaders place great importance on broadening pupils' experiences, self-awareness and confidence. As a result, pupils have the opportunity to sing, dance and perform in school plays and contests. For example, pupils from Reception to Year 6 have entered the school talent competition. Groups of pupils rehearse in their lunchtimes, prepare their own scripts, choreograph their own dance routines and are responsible for all aspects of organisation, props and costumes.
- Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils learn about the wider community. They are taught to respect people from different backgrounds and with different characteristics. Pupils raise funds for charities and learn about tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. A strength of the school is the opportunities that older pupils get to participate regularly in debates. For example, using a children's news programme as a stimulus, pupils discuss, write and share their opinions on a diverse range of topics such as refugees and bullying. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain and understand its values.
- The support from the local authority is appropriate and helpful. The school's excellent practice in teaching and learning, particularly in early years, is valued highly by the local authority. As a result, the school is often asked to share its expertise with other schools. The school plays a full part within a network of schools. These schools support each other in a range of areas, for example, working together to develop practice and checks with regard to assessment.

Governance of the school

- Governors are highly effective and make an important contribution to raising standards in the school.
- Governors know their school extremely well and are confident and skilled to ask challenging questions. The attributes of the governors have been utilised very well to ensure that their expertise benefits the school. Governors are confident to be involved in all aspects of the school's development and monitoring of improvement. However, they sometimes receive a very large amount of documentation that does not help them to evaluate quickly and easily the impact of the actions that have been taken.
- Governors have a good understanding of performance management procedures and, as well as holding teachers and leaders to account, they ensure the management of teachers' pay is effective.
- Governors are conscientious and take part in all relevant training on good governance practice and understanding school assessment. As a result, governors have good levels of understanding about the progress pupils are making. They make sure that the pupil premium and the PE and sports grants are spent effectively and make a difference to pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Robust systems are in place, which are understood by staff. There is a clear message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Records are detailed and kept securely. Regular and appropriate training for staff is undertaken and safeguarding has a high priority in school. There are updates on related issues as they arise, including those linked to keeping pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism. Leaders are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Effective relationships with other agencies and with parents ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The quality of teaching and learning across the whole school is consistently high. This has led to pupils making outstanding progress.
- The teaching at Singleton is characterised by friendly, warm relationships between staff and pupils. The extremely well-organised lessons balance the needs of the different ages and abilities of pupils within the class very effectively. The learning environment is stimulating and industrious. Staff have high expectations of pupils in both their learning and behaviour. Pupils rise to these by working hard and taking an active, enthusiastic and responsible role in their learning. Pupils enjoy their learning enormously and say it is fun and exciting.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very strong. They use this knowledge with confidence to challenge and extend pupils' thinking. There is a 'buzz' about learning. Adults ask

just the right questions to aid pupils' thinking, draw out learning and help them move on.

- Teachers and leaders check on pupils' learning regularly. The whole staff team is very confident in using the assessment system and do so to great effect. Adults' constant checks on individual pupils' understanding make an important contribution to the secure progress pupils make in their learning. Teaching is focused precisely on what individual pupils need to learn; it provides opportunities for them to practise their skills so that they are confident to use them in different situations. Pupils are self-assured to think through their learning, drawing on what they already know that can help them solve a problem and create new solutions.
- Where pupils struggle with their learning, a very effective range of learning opportunities helps them catch up. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively across key stages 1 and 2. They are knowledgeable and skilled and make a good contribution to the progress of the pupils with whom they work.
- For those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the support they are offered is broad, clearly targeted and of an excellent quality. Teachers plan additional support very well, resulting in many of the pupils being able to work at the same level as their peers. Pupils that are not able to do this still make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Teachers assess pupils' work regularly, in line with the school's policy. They make clear to pupils what they have done well and offer appropriate guidance to help them improve their work further. Pupils are keen to receive this feedback and quickly act on comments to improve. Older pupils are taught how to assess their own and peers' work. As a result of pupils having a thorough understanding of their learning, they are able to offer an appropriate level of comment and advice to classmates.
- The development of reading, writing, grammar and mathematical skills is a high priority in school. A rich variety of texts is used very effectively in each class to create a range of interesting and stimulating activities. Pupils effectively deepen their learning and practise their skills.
- All parents who responded to Parent View or spoke to the inspector in the playground felt that their children were well taught. Most felt that the quality of information given to them about their children's learning was valuable and of a good quality. Many praised how adults 'go the extra mile' to support their children in their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The importance leaders place on pupils' personal development and welfare is very apparent. Staff and governors are conscientious in fulfilling their responsibility to

ensure that the school provides a safe, nurturing environment in which pupils can thrive and succeed.

- Staff treat pupils with consideration and ensure that the school makes everyone feel welcome and valued. Adults constantly model respectful and caring behaviour in lessons, around school and in the way they engage with pupils. As a result, pupils behave similarly and are thoughtful and compassionate citizens.
- The care and consideration the older pupils display to younger ones is striking and a strength of the school. For example, many older pupils play with younger ones and they are quick to pick up on a pupil playing on their own or looking sad. Older pupils speak to younger ones with a gentleness and empathy that is beyond their years.
- The overwhelming majority of parents spoken to by inspectors and those that responded to Parent View expressed huge praise for the school and the work of the staff. Parents felt that their children were happy and well looked after. A number of parents were keen to say that their children were flourishing. They put this down to the staff's skills at nurturing and building confidence, but also because staff go 'above and beyond' for all of the children.
- The vast majority of pupils, throughout key stages 1 and 2 are confident learners and are happy to talk about their learning. Pupils told inspectors how proud they are of their school and how they are well looked after by adults. The school has focused on developing a 'can do' attitude to learning and everything new they encounter. Pupils are excellent ambassadors for this approach and pupils of all ages will talk confidently about 'not giving up'. For example, an adult asked whether a pupil was proud of his work and he replied, 'I am, because I tried my very best.' This is a typical comment.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection were very clear about what bullying was and said that incidents were very rare. They were confident that teachers dealt with any unkind or negative language towards pupils quickly. Pupils were unanimous in their view that they felt safe in school and all knew how to keep themselves safe personally and online. All parents who responded to Parent View felt that the school deals appropriately with bullying, or that they were not aware of any bullying towards their child.
- Pupils are encouraged to be actively involved in the life of the school, from 'playground buddies' to leading assemblies; they rise effortlessly to the responsibilities they are given. Pupils' views are highly valued by adults, and they are often involved in revising policies such as on behaviour or offering ideas to projects and initiatives.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils conduct themselves impeccably around school. They relish fun and are spirited in their approach to school life, but they are also clear about their boundaries. They are extremely polite and well mannered. Staff and pupils know each other very well and consider themselves to be part of a close school family.

- There is a very productive atmosphere in the classrooms. Pupils are encouraged and confident to work without the constant attention of an adult. Pupils are attentive and eager to participate in lessons, visibly enjoying activities. They have excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are fully aware of how to behave and the consequences of poor behaviour. They say incidents of inappropriate behaviour are very infrequent, dealt with quickly by teachers and responded to by pupils appropriately. Pupils often display self-control and are confident to correct others on the rare occasions it is needed. For example, when walking through a group of pupils, one pupil reminded another to say 'excuse me'. Pupils are responsive and highly respectful to adults and each other.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their high level of attendance, currently above that of other pupils nationally. The systems for monitoring absence are meticulous and effective. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school. The occasional pupil that is persistently absent is picked up quickly and appropriate support ensures they are soon back on track.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Senior leaders and governors are determined that standards should be the highest possible for each individual pupil. As a result, pupils' overall achievement across the school has continued to improve and outcomes are now outstanding.
- The number of pupils that took the national tests at the end of key stages 1 and 2 was small. Therefore, caution must be applied when making comparisons with nationally published information.
- At the end of key stage 2 in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, spelling and punctuation was well above that found nationally. Historically, the proportion of pupils achieving more than expected progress has been high in all subjects. In 2016, under the new curriculum, higher standards were comparable to that of pupils nationally in reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling and above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving higher standards in writing was similar to national averages. However, the school's in-year tracking of progress indicates that current pupils are at age-related expectations in writing and a high proportion are above average. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and looking at pupils' books confirms that this is the case.
- Achievement is consistently strong at the end of key stage 1, with most pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. Pupils also achieved well at greater depth in all three subjects and were above pupils nationally, with particular strengths in writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics at the end of Year 1 is well above average.

- Pupils enjoy reading and talk excitedly about books. Pupils that struggle with reading have excellent support to practise skills and catch up rapidly. Pupils are very proud of the progress that they make.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. As a result, they make outstanding progress by the end of key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils' attainment is similar to other pupils in school and above others nationally. This is because the school monitors the progress of these pupils effectively and regularly and ensures that they are supported well to improve.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress from their starting points. The excellent support offered by teachers and teaching assistants is very effective and ensures that pupils succeed in their learning.
- In 2016, all most-able pupils met at least the expected standard in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. Although a number of them reached higher standards in writing and mathematics, not as many reached higher standards in reading. Leaders have put strategies in place successfully to improve the opportunities for pupils to read in greater depth across the whole school. They recognise that pupils need more opportunities to think more deeply about characters' feelings and intentions and to interpret the meaning in different texts.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children start school with skills and knowledge typical for their age. By the time they leave the early years, they are making at least good progress and often better. They benefit from a vibrant and stimulating environment in which to learn. This is coupled with high expectations by adults, to make sure that children thrive and enjoy a very positive start to school life.
- The proportion of children who reach a good level of development at the end of Reception is consistently high, and in 2016, was well above average. Their excellent start means that they are well prepared and confident to start in Year 1.
- The early years is led confidently. Leaders have a clear view about the strengths and how to improve provision and children's learning successfully. These improvements are based on a thorough understanding of children's development, flexibility to adapt to the individual needs of pupils and ambition for them.
- Safeguarding is effective. Risk assessments are appropriate and the classrooms are a safe environment, inside and out, while still allowing children to try out new experiences and take appropriate risks.
- Teachers' assessment and the tracking of children's learning are of the same high quality as found in the rest of school. This information is gathered constantly and used very effectively to plan a curriculum for children that is both interesting and relevant. As a result, adults know and respond to the individual learning needs of children to great effect, including the most able and children that are disadvantaged. This ensures that additional funding is used very effectively to provide resources and support for disadvantaged children.

- Provision is very well organised to create a rich and varied learning environment for all children both inside and outdoors. As a result, children are excited about their learning and confident in their abilities. Activities are fun, led regularly by the interests of the children, capture their imagination and allow them to practise their skills. For example, a visit by a child to an ophthalmologist developed into a class theme where an optician's role play area was created. Children made colourful, sparkly glasses and an optician's letter chart was adapted to teach phonics.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Adults demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and are highly skilled at asking questions to draw out children's understanding. The importance placed on reading, writing and mathematical skills is very evident, with regular chances for children to write, practise their letters and sounds, and use numbers in all that they do. For example, a child building a den outside in the wooded area decided that his construction needed a name. He got paper and a pen and made a sign for the entrance. This was quickly copied by all the children.
- The strong emphasis on creating a caring and nurturing environment is evident from the very positive relationships adults have with children. Children play and learn together extremely well. They take an interest in each other frequently and can be heard offering their classmates help if needed. Children have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is of a very high standard.
- Extremely positive relationships are formed between parents and staff. Leaders offer opportunities to share and involve parents in their child's learning, encouraging parents to come into the classroom at the beginning and end of the day. In turn, parents are highly appreciative of the way their children thrive and grow in a stimulating and happy environment.
- Transition arrangements are very effective. Leaders are flexible in offering extra meetings, visits to homes or to nursery settings, according to each family's preferences. All parents are kept well informed prior to their child starting school. Each child is paired with a Year 5 'buddy'. The older pupil writes to their child to welcome them and keeps a friendly eye on them around school. This relationship is highly valued by both children and is typical of the caring approach of the school.

School details

Unique reference number	119560
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10032341

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alec Davies
Headteacher	Amanda Clayton
Telephone number	01253 882 226
Website	www.singleton.lancs.sch.uk
Email address	head@singleton.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2013

Information about this school

- Singleton is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is 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.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in all classes. She observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. She also observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtimes.
- The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books and in the learning journals of children in the early years.
- The inspector listened to a number of pupils read.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the senior teacher who was also the special educational needs coordinator and early years leader, the people responsible for safeguarding and attendance, and middle leaders.
- The inspector met with six members of the governing body, including the chair. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with the inspector. She also spoke informally with pupils in the playground and around school.
- The inspector took account of 12 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- She also took account of 36 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and talked briefly with a number of parents before school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: minutes from meetings of the governing body; information on pupils' attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its own performance; and the school's development plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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