

St James' Church of England Primary School, Clitheroe

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119419
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379797
Inspection dates	31 January 2012–1 February 2012
Lead inspector	Clare Henderson

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	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Clayton
Headteacher	Paul Adnitt
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2008
School address	Greenacre Street Clitheroe BB7 1ED
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Clare Henderson
Allyson Ingall

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by 10 teachers, listened to individual pupils reading in Years 1 and 2 and scrutinised pupils' work. They held meetings with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to consider when planning the inspection. The inspectors scrutinised the questionnaires completed by staff and pupils and analysed the 98 from parents and carers.

Information about the school

This school is similar in size to the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs or are disabled. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small minority are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a few are learning English as an additional language. Mobility into the school is above average. The school meets the current floor standards. The school has gained Healthy Schools status, The Wild Life Trust and Eco School awards. The school runs breakfast- and after-school clubs which were considered during this inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It has improved well since the last inspection and has the capacity to be even better. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners. They feel extremely safe and well cared for and behave exceptionally well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The vast majority of parents and carers confirm these positive views and engage very well with the school.
- Achievement is good and rapidly improving. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress from their below-average starting points. Attainment at Key Stage 1 is improving securely and is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics which has, in recent years, been broadly average, is rapidly improving. This is confirmed by the attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 which is above average in English and mathematics. This is as a result of the high priority given, since the last inspection, to developing pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills.
- The proportion of outstanding lessons is increasing but is not yet at a level that will accelerate pupils' progress to outstanding in all year groups. Lessons typically see pupils responding with enthusiasm to a range of practical and stimulating activities. However, tasks in lessons do not always fully match or challenge pupils' abilities in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher, senior staff and members of the governing body have successfully led improvement. They constantly review the school's performance and are clear about the direction the school must take to secure further improvements. For example, they correctly recognise that maintaining the focus on improving teaching is a key priority and is central. However, this work is not fully shared with middle leaders.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate the progress of pupils further by:
 - ensuring tasks in all lessons consistently match pupils' abilities and provide enough challenge to enable them to make outstanding progress
 - fully involving middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils develop a love of learning and are keen and motivated to succeed. They are fully attentive in class and engage enthusiastically with a wide range of experiences. They particularly enjoy activities that fire their imagination for learning and those where they can discuss and share their ideas with each other. For instance, by working together in small groups, pupils in a Key Stage 2 music lesson developed communication, literacy and music composition skills very effectively. They eagerly undertook the role of audience and/or performer and confidently discussed and reviewed each other's work, making well-thought-out suggestions as to how the work could be improved.

Pupils' current work and the school's own data show that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has rapidly improved and is now above average. A notable success is that the proportion of pupils in within the school making expected levels of progress in English and mathematics is now above the national average, reflecting the upward trend in the school's performance. Parents and carers quite rightly have recognised this improvement in pupils' progress. One parent's view was typical of many: 'We are really pleased with our child's progress.'

When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage what they know and can do varies, but overall their skills and abilities are below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication. The good provision ensures they settle quickly and enables them to make great strides in their learning. Work in lessons and in their books shows that pupils, including those who have special educational needs, those who are disabled and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress as they move through the school to Year 6. All pupils acquire good skills in reading relative to their starting points as a result of a successful whole-school focus to accelerate the progress made in developing skills of literacy and communication. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is now broadly similar to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is largely because improvements in teaching and learning are increasing the progress pupils make in lessons. However, in a few lessons, tasks do not always fully match and challenge pupils' abilities in English and mathematics.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved and impacts strongly on pupils' outstanding behaviour and extremely positive attitudes to their learning. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils are fully established in all lessons. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of extra support, particularly for those pupils who find learning difficult or who join the

school other than at the beginning of the school year. Staff know when to intervene and how to interact with pupils to enhance their learning because assessment information is generally used well. Pupils have regular opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with their classmates and to check each other's understanding. They are supported effectively in knowing how to improve their work through effective comments from teachers in their books, although it is not always clear how or when these comments are followed up by pupils.

When the planning and teaching are at their best, and expectations are high, the impact on pupils' progress is significant, as seen during the inspection when pupils in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson were learning to use written methods to record division of numbers. With the teacher's clear explanations and acute knowledge and understanding of where each pupil is in their learning, pupils were enabled to develop new ways and apply previously learnt skills to solve mathematical problems. Where teaching is less strong, tasks lack enough pace and challenge and restrict pupils' ability to sustain a high rate of progress.

The school has taken effective steps to improve the teaching of reading and writing in all classes. Readers in Years 1 and 2 for instance, talk about spelling patterns in words with increasing awareness and accuracy. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who are disabled or are learning English as an additional language make good progress in reading because interventions are well taught. The introduction of a systematic scheme to teach reading is leading to pupils' greater confidence in tackling unfamiliar words. Parents and carers report how pleased they are with their children's progress in reading and, understandably, they feel that the overall quality of teaching is good.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour as seen in class and around the school during the inspection and from records held by the school is outstanding. They make an exceptional contribution to a safe, positive learning environment. The vast majority of parents and carers say that the school manages behaviour well. In lessons pupils respond very enthusiastically to learning, enabling lessons to proceed without interruptions. Pupils show very high levels of respect, collaboration and cooperation in and out of lessons. For instance, they have worked closely together with the local community to develop their eco area and talk enthusiastically about the benefit this has for the whole community.

Instances of all kinds of bullying are rare, and pupils and most parents and carers are confident that staff will listen and act on their concerns should problems arise. Pupils commented, 'If we have any problems, teachers sort it.' They have a clear understanding of the need to lead a safe lifestyle. This is reflected in the way they explain their understanding of possibly unsafe situations, such as on the road. Pupils take their many roles and responsibilities very seriously. For example, older pupils run an exceptionally wide range of clubs for the younger ones during lunch breaks. This enables them to develop leadership skills whilst extending the confidence and skills of cooperation and teamwork for the younger pupils. They demonstrate both exceptional understanding of other cultures and tolerance of differences, contributing to their outstanding behaviour and safety. They say they feel extremely happy and secure in school; this is reflected in their above-average levels of attendance and contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school.

Leadership and management

The improvements evident are underpinned by the drive and determination of the headteacher to see the school improve further. With good support from senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body he is leading the school effectively. All staff have improved their understanding of what makes for effective practice through well-targeted training and support. Although expectations have been raised and there is clear agreement on the strengths in provision and where further improvements can be made, middle leaders are not fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and so cannot contribute fully to quickening the rate of progress further. Effective action has been taken to raise the achievement of pupils and to close the gap between attainment at the school and the national average for all groups of pupils. As a consequence, the school's commitment to equality of opportunity is strong and the school is effective in tackling discrimination and preparing all pupils well for the next stage in their education.

The impact of the curriculum on pupils' outcomes is good. All pupils benefit from an excellent choice of extra-curricular activities, including outstanding before- and after-school provision, sports, arts and music clubs. Pupils confirm these activities add considerable enjoyment to their learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because these aspects are woven meaningfully into all the subjects pupils study. Pupils learn to care for, respect and reflect about beliefs and values and respond positively to the wide range of cultural opportunities provided by the school.

The governing body plays an effective role in shaping the school's direction and in holding it to account. Members are committed and are confident in challenging and supporting the school to improve further. They are well-informed and are involved in planning for improvement and in evaluating the school's performance. The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Not a moment is lost to ensure that all pupils, including those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, are well cared for and looked after. Considering the good improvements made since its last inspection and, along with its other strengths including the now rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and improvement in the quality of teaching, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



2 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James' Church of England Primary School, Clitheroe, BB7 1ED

Thank you so much for helping the inspectors during our visit. We really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, in the pupil interviews and when we listened to some of you read. You told us how proud you are of your school. We read the many comments made by your parents and carers. The vast majority were very complimentary about the school. Please thank them for taking the time to write to us.

You go to a good school. You are taught well and receive excellent care and support in all classes and from all staff. You make good progress in lessons and your behaviour, in lessons and around the school, is outstanding. The quality of your singing and exemplary behaviour in assembly were impressive, as is the care and attention you give to each other and especially to disabled classmates. We were very impressed with your responsible attitudes and the way you consider each other's feelings so well. We were particularly impressed with the confident way the older pupils plan and lead clubs for young ones at lunchtime.

You enjoy the many interesting activities arranged for you thoroughly, especially in the before- and after-school clubs. Your headteacher and all the school's leaders are determined to improve your school so that you all do as well as you possibly can. To do this, we have asked them to make sure that tasks in lessons always match and challenge your abilities. We have also asked that middle leaders are involved in reviewing the quality of the teaching you receive.

We hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and to do your best to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Clare Henderson
Lead inspector

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