

Lytham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119551
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379834
Inspection dates	23–24 February 2012
Lead inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Smalley
Headteacher	Nicola Worrad
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
School address	Park View Road Lytham St Annes FY8 4HA
Telephone number	01253 736900
Fax number	01253 736901
Email address	head@lytham.lancs.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates
Allyson Ingall

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team visited 14 lessons, observing eight teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teaching staff, the Chair and another member of the Governing Body and groups of pupils. Inspectors also listened to eight pupils read. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at governing body minutes, the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, pupils' work and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 95 parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Lytham Church of England primary school is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is below that seen nationally. The school has achieved a number of awards including the silver Eco school award. The school exceeds the government's current floor standard. There is on-site provision for children before and after school but this provision is not managed by the school and will be the subject of a separate inspection. At the time of the inspection the school was recovering from several tragic incidents concerning pupils and parents.

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	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It provides very strong care and support for its pupils. The school is not outstanding because not enough teaching is yet outstanding and the level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils is not yet consistently high enough.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, promote pupils’ learning successfully. They ensure a good curriculum that promotes pupils’ positive attitudes to learning and develops their reading and literacy skills well. Leaders and managers monitor and develop the quality of teaching effectively. Performance is also well managed to drive improvement.
- Pupils’ achievement is good. Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment is above average in English and mathematics. This represents good progress overall. An above average proportion of pupils attain the higher levels in end of Key Stage 2 tests. Reading skills are taught well and this results in above average attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teaching is good overall. However, there are a few shortcomings. For example, in some lessons the pace of teaching is sometimes too slow, with not enough done to ensure that more-able pupils are sufficiently challenged. Marking is regular and of generally good quality. However, it does not always make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve further nor does it evaluate whether pupils have acted on any suggestions made.
- Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire think highly of the school. Pupils’ behaviour is good. Bullying of any kind and racist incidents are very rare and dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils feel very safe in school and have a good understanding of what constitute potentially unsafe situations and how to deal with them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and increase the rate of pupils' progress further by improving the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good with more that is outstanding to ensure that:
 - all lessons move at a fast pace
 - the teaching of mathematics provides plenty of challenging opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills in problem solving
 - higher-attaining pupils are consistently challenged in all subjects
 - marking is consistently effective in showing pupils clearly what they need to do to improve their work.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are usually broadly in line with those expected for their age. From these starting points, pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the time they leave the school pupils' attainment is above average. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire believe that their children make good progress at school. This is an accurate view and matches inspection findings. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage gets children off to a good start. As a result, most of them move up to Year 1 with good foundations in their early literacy and numeracy skills, which are successfully built on during Key Stages 1 and 2. However, while pupils develop their basic number skills well, there is inconsistency in the progress they make in applying them accurately to solving problems.

Standards of attainment are generally above national averages in English and mathematics by the time pupils leave the school at the age of 11. Pupils are increasingly given real purposes for writing and are encouraged to rehearse their ideas orally before embarking on writing. During the inspection, pupils in a Year 4 lesson, for example, were excited about developing their own similes and how using them could help them write better poetry. Their eagerness to write their own similes was infectious and they made good progress as a result. Pupils enjoy researching the information they need for their topics and regularly apply their reading and writing skills well. For example, older pupils produce a very well-constructed and very well-written school newsletter.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified accurately. This leads to effective actions to support their learning. There is no difference in the progress of different ethnic groups. Most higher-attaining pupils make good progress and achieve in line with their potential. However, when teaching does not challenge them sufficiently, their progress sometimes slows.

Attainment in reading is above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 because of the school's successful focus on its development and because the school has successfully improved the management of teaching phonics (letters and sounds).

Quality of teaching

Some teaching of early reading skills is outstanding. Teaching assistants, like teachers, are skilled in the correct articulation of sounds when teaching phonics. Pupils are very positive about teaching. They describe their lessons as fun and interesting. Very good relationships exist between all staff and pupils. This encourages pupils to work hard and want to do their best. Teaching and the curriculum promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, it is very difficult to see what more could have been done in supporting pupils following recent tragic events in the school. A strength of teaching is the way pupils are encouraged to develop and use their good personal skills to work collaboratively. For example, there was a real buzz of learning in a Year 2 lesson where pupils worked in small groups to decide how to plan and then carry out a data handling exercise. Collaborative work makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and moral development. Sometimes, where teaching is less successful, lessons lack pace and tasks for more-able pupils are not well matched to their prior attainment.

Teachers' good questioning skills promote learning well overall. Occasionally, however, teachers do not always use a wide enough range of strategies to ensure that all pupils engage and respond to their questions. Throughout the school opportunities for pupils to use and apply their problem-solving skills in mathematics are inconsistent. Marking and feedback are of variable quality in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work and pupils do not always have time to reflect on teachers' comments or respond to them. As a result, pupils are sometimes unclear about what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants provide good support for the groups and individuals they work with. They are effective in ensuring that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to others through well-targeted support and activities that meet their learning needs well.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a good balance of activities that are directed by adults and those where children make their own choices. For example, children really enjoy the challenge of being 'Shape detectives' when asked to try and find 2 dimensional shapes that are hidden in the classrooms and in the outside area. Classrooms provide a stimulating learning environment where, for example, children's early writing and number skills are promoted to good effect.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good attitudes to learning were evident in lessons throughout the inspection, even when the pace of learning sometimes slowed. School records show that behaviour over time has given very little cause for concern. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were strongly positive about behaviour. Pupils have a similar view but a small number of pupils say that behaviour is not always good, but it has little or no effect on their work in classrooms. Pupils also add that adults in the school manage behaviour issues well. The school's expectations, based on its ethos as a Christian foundation, are clear and pupils respond to them willingly. The school has a good knowledge of its very few pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. They are supported well, including the effective use of nurture groups. Their progress against their identified needs is tracked closely and shows notable improvement over time. Strong relationships between adults and pupils are evident

in lessons and around the school. Pupils show high levels of collaboration and all groups, including the very few pupils from minority ethnic groups, mix and work together well. As a result, prejudice-based bullying or other forms of bullying are rare. The school remains alert and ready to tackle bullying, if it occurs. For example, in the term before the inspection anti-bullying strategies were given a high profile as part of a 'Friendship' topic, including a well-attended meeting for parents and carers.

Pupils enjoy being at school and their above average attendance reflects this. They are provided with many opportunities to understand how they can keep themselves and others safe. As a result, pupils are alert to risks posed by potential hazards in classrooms and around the school. They are also aware of risks associated with substance abuse and the potential dangers of using new technologies. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire believe that their children feel safe at school.

Leadership and management

There is a resolute determination by senior leaders and managers to secure improvement. The leadership of teaching and management of performance are good and effective in driving improvement. The school has been through a very difficult time recently. However, because of its very strong Christian ethos and its firm determination focused on ensuring pupils receive high quality personal support, it continues to ensure pupils make good progress. Leaders at all levels monitor the quality of teaching and the progress of individual pupils rigorously. Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the schools effectiveness and where it could improve further. The school uses professional development well to improve the quality of teaching. This is especially evident in the impact good quality professional development has had on improving the quality of teaching of early reading skills.

Strategic planning provides clear working guidance for all individuals connected with the school. The governing body is well led and carries out its duties conscientiously. Safeguarding procedures are secure, meet requirements and follow best practice guidelines. The curriculum is of a good quality. It adds greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is also good. Themed events, such as 'Friendship Weeks', promote key skills because they develop learning across a range of subjects. A strong personal, health and social education programme makes a good contribution to pupils' good personal development.

The school is very inclusive and pupils feel valued as individuals. It promotes equality of opportunity well by narrowing the gap between the performance of different groups and providing learning opportunities that enable all groups of pupils to achieve well. Discrimination is tackled effectively. Good leadership, good teaching, much improved strategies for raising attainment in reading and improved tracking systems demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

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.



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Lytham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Lytham St Annes, FY8 4HA**

Thank you for being so helpful when we visited your school. You are very polite and were keen to talk to us about your school work. There are many things to be proud of in your school. You achieve well. You behave very well in lessons and around school. You get on well with the adults who work with you and look after you and you get on well with each other and feel very safe.

You go to a good school. Your work is very neat showing you take a pride in what you do. You make good progress in English and mathematics. We really enjoyed looking at your work. Some of it is very good. We loved the penguin display in one class and hearing you sing so very well in the school assembly.

We have asked your school to do some things to improve even more. They are: in mathematics we want you to be given more chances to use your mental arithmetic skills in problem solving; we want senior leaders to make sure that all the teaching you receive is at least good; we want the pace of teaching to be consistently fast enough; we want the level of challenge for those of you who are fast learners to be high enough in all lessons; and we want your teachers to make it clearer to you what you need to do to improve your work.

Keep up that good attendance and keep listening to your teachers and trying to do your best.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates
Lead inspector

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