

# Accrington St Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119446
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379804
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Kathleen McArthur

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	160
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lorna Kenyon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Hardman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Devonshire Street Accrington BB5 1DW
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur  
Desmond Stubbs

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by six teachers and met with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors took account of responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, of the 31 questionnaires received from parents and carers and those returned by pupils and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at school and national data, pupils' progress tracking, school self-evaluation, professional development and the work in pupils' books.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Numbers on roll have increased steadily and there are no mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average. The large majority of pupils are White British. A small number are from minority ethnic groups, the largest of which is Pakistani. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than average. The school does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress. There has been considerable staffing change and turbulence since the previous inspection, and a new headteacher took up post in September 2010. The building is currently undergoing major remodelling to provide a new Early Years Foundation Stage classroom and dedicated outdoor learning area. The school holds various awards, including the Bronze Eco-School award, Investors in People and has Healthy School status.

A private provider offers after-school provision on the school site. This provision is inspected separately and receives a separate report, available on the Ofsted website.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- The school provides a satisfactory quality of education in a welcoming, harmonious environment. Particular strengths are in pupils' good behaviour, the promotion of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and above-average attendance. The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory rather than good, because pupils' progress is too variable, especially in Key Stage 2.
- School data, lesson observations and the work in pupils' books show that attainment is now broadly average and rising. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but progress varies between the key stages. Progress is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 but, although accelerating rapidly, is only satisfactory in Key Stage 2.
- Teaching is satisfactory and an increasing proportion is good, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Clear assessment information enables staff to direct extra help where needed, for example, for pupils with special educational needs. However, this information is not always used in planning next steps in learning to build on what pupils already know and to match tasks precisely to their individual needs. Pupils are not always sure which level they are aiming for and marking and feedback do not always show them how to improve their work. The curriculum does not always sufficiently provide pupils with meaningful links between subjects, nor does it inspire pupils' enthusiasm or enable them regularly to work independently.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They behave well. Pupils show high levels of respect for adults and their classmates and are eager to help and contribute to their school community.
- The headteacher's dedication and drive, well-supported by all leaders and managers, is now securely moving the school forward. Professional development and performance management targets have ensured better quality teaching and rising attainment, confirming that there is satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and ensure that progress is consistently good, particularly in Key Stage 2 by:
  - making precise use of assessment information to plan the next steps so that learning builds on pupils' prior knowledge and matches work more closely to their individual needs
  - providing clear marking and feedback so that pupils have a secure understanding of where they are, what level they are aiming to reach and how to improve their work
  - developing a curriculum that inspires pupils' enthusiasm and interest through meaningful links between subjects and by regularly enabling them to work independently
  - ensuring that the best practice in teaching is found in all classes.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication. The vibrant, caring environment builds their confidence so they quickly feel secure and keen to investigate the stimulating activities. They enjoy their daily letter and sounds activities, especially linking sounds and actions to lively music. A new classroom and outdoor learning area was under construction at the time of the inspection. Children progress well in all areas of learning, but still enter Year 1 with skills below those expected.

Responses in all questionnaires returned by parents and carers show that they feel their children progress well. Lessons observations show pupils' good behaviour and attitudes ensure that progress is always at least satisfactory and good where teaching is stronger. Progress is weaker in Key Stage 2. Pupils tackle their tasks willingly and cooperate well with classmates and staff, but sometimes tasks are not closely matched to individual needs. Although very specific circumstances lowered outcomes in 2011, attainment is typically broadly average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. School data and pupils' work show that pupils currently in Year 6 are securely on course to reach broadly-average attainment. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as their classmates because they receive well-organised support. Effective actions are rapidly narrowing the gap for any pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances or identified as underachieving. Workshops and clubs provide additional support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals pupils and their parents and carers, to ensure that this group achieves as well as others.

The care with which pupils present their work is a strength. Pupils have some opportunities to use and develop literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, but opportunities to work independently are not sufficiently provided. Good teaching of letters and blending sounds ensure that pupils make rapid progress and their attainment is broadly average in reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 1. Attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Older pupils demonstrate good oral skills, observed in some lively discussions and reasoned arguments, but do not write as fluently.

## Quality of teaching

Parents and carers feel that their children are taught well, but inspection findings are that the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. School monitoring records show that the proportion of good teaching is increasing. Teachers are generally enthusiastic and much good practice was observed during the inspection, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Lessons promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, resulting in the friendly relationships observed between pupils and staff. Pupils behave well and say they enjoy their lessons, especially information and communication technology (ICT) because, 'we learn about technology and use lots of different programs'. The best teaching features effective questioning, challenging and imaginative activities and good feedback that stimulates pupils' thinking skills and accelerates progress. In a Year 5 science lesson, the teacher's skilled questioning promoted discussions that led to pupils devising their own investigations of evaporation. The skilled teaching assistants make a strong contribution, for example, when teaching letters and sounds or supporting pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. Sometimes lessons, particularly in Key Stage 2, lack pace and staff do not always build on pupils' prior knowledge when planning the next steps in learning to ensure that activities meet the needs of all pupils. The recently-introduced extended writing sessions have successfully boosted writing skills. However, opportunities for pupils to work independently are limited. The quality of marking and feedback varies and does not always provide guidance to help pupils improve their work or to reach and exceed their targets. This has a negative impact on progress in Key Stage 2.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Typically, pupils behave well in lessons, when moving round the narrow corridors and stairs and play safely and cooperatively in the small playground. They reflect the school's caring ethos, welcoming visitors in a polite and friendly manner and show concern and consideration for others. Older pupils look after younger ones carefully, and pupils know they can find someone to play with at the 'friendship area' in the playground. The school councillors say they discuss what is best for the school, for example, a canopy to provide a shaded area outside. Parents and carers, pupils and staff agree with inspection findings that the school is a safe environment. The curriculum ensures pupils' know how to care for their own safety on the roads, around fire and in water. The school's behaviour management system is known and regarded as fair. Pupils feel behaviour is generally good and have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, for example when using the internet. They do not regard any form of bullying as an issue in school, because they trust staff to sort out any problems, and know they must try to resolve any conflicts between themselves. Attendance has improved due to the school's rigorous actions and is now above average.

## Leadership and management

Concerted teamwork by senior leaders, managers and the governing body has raised aspirations and established a vision for ongoing improvement. Accurate self-evaluation leads to focused development plans with challenging success criteria and time limits. The period of turbulence slowed the rate of improvement and school leaders are well aware there is much more to be done to see the full impact of their strategies and plans, especially in accelerating progress in Key Stage 2. Thorough monitoring of the quality of teaching, with outcomes used to set performance management targets, has seen a steady rise in the proportion of good teaching. High staff morale, sustained good behaviour, accelerating progress and rising attainment demonstrate secure capacity for further improvement.

Members of the governing body provide suitable challenge and informed support based on their close involvement with the school and links with the parish and the local community. They work closely with senior leaders to ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements and give no cause for concern. The curriculum is generally matched to the needs of all groups of pupils so that they are suitably prepared for the next stage of their lives. It does not link subjects or really capitalise on pupils' enthusiasm and interests. The wide variety of lunchtime- and after-school clubs is very popular and take-up is high, and the choir is looking forward to performing at the Civic Hall. Well-promoted spiritual, moral, social and cultural development results in good behaviour, happy relationships and respect for other faiths. Leaders successfully ensure that there is no discrimination by placing the promotion of equality at the centre of the school's work. This is seen in the extra support for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, which has successfully narrowed the gap between their attainment and progress and that of other groups. The school works well with parents and carers to help them support learning at home, and responses in their questionnaires were extremely positive.

## 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](http://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 up 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.**



12 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Accrington St. Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School, Accrington, BB5 1DW**

I would like to thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school. Everyone we met was very polite and helpful, friendly and smiling. We were impressed by your good behaviour and by the way you care for each other. I enjoyed the Celebration Assembly, seeing so many of you receive awards for hard work, kindness and good behaviour. I send a special 'thank you' to the pupils who gave up their break time to talk to us and tell us about the school. Your parents and carers told us they are very pleased with your school.

We found that your school is satisfactory. The leaders, managers and teachers make sure that you are always safe and happy, and are working hard to improve the building. The Early Years Foundation Stage gives you a good start in school. The construction work can be a bit noisy, especially for those of you in Year 4, but we know that you are looking forward to the new Reception classroom and outdoor area. Teaching is mostly satisfactory and some is good. You make sound progress and reach the standards expected for your age when you leave.

We have agreed some areas for improvement with your headteacher and school leaders to raise your attainment and help you make faster progress, especially in Key Stage 2, by:

- planning lessons that build on what you already know and meet your needs
- giving feedback that tells you where you are and how to improve your work
- finding ways to making the curriculum more interesting and exciting
- making sure teaching is good in all classes.

We know you will do your best to help your teachers and the school leaders.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur  
Lead Inspector

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