

Thurnham Glasson Christ Church, Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119543
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339464
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2010
Reporting 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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Milstone
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Thomas
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2007
School address	Marsh Lane Glasson Dock, Lancaster Lancashire LA2 0AR
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector observed seven lessons taught by three teachers and observed two practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils, observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. The views of parents and carers, through 21 returned inspection questionnaires, and the views of staff and pupils were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effectively pupils are challenged to achieve the higher levels of attainment in English and mathematics.
- How effective is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in enabling children to develop creativity and independence.
- The extent of pupils' understanding and experience of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom and the wider world.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers, including the governing body, in driving improvement and providing a good capacity to improve further.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller in size than other primary schools. A high proportion of pupils travel to attend from outside the local area. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. All pupils are of White British backgrounds. The school has gained the Eco Green Flag, Financial Management Standards in Schools and Healthy School status.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is successful in promoting its motto, 'small school, big learning'. Instrumental to this success is the relentless drive for improvement which the headteacher, other staff and members of the governing body have made since the last inspection. Their actions have been a significant factor in the good progress of all groups of pupils. Attainment is above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Furthermore, pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and community and show an excellent understanding of what is needed to lead healthy, safe and ecological lifestyles.

The staff pay close attention to pupils' personal needs and contribute very effectively to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. As a result, pupils have high self-esteem and are very confident. The quality of teaching and the use adults make of assessment information to set work which is challenging and matched to pupils' ages and abilities are good. However, pupils are not fully involved in evaluating and improving their own learning. The good quality curriculum with a recently introduced creative focus is providing pupils with some memorable experiences and is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Cultural development is not as strong as other aspects. Despite the school's overall good promotion of community cohesion, pupils have limited opportunities to engage with children from a range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds within the United Kingdom and the wider world.

Because self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Leaders and managers demonstrate a determination to continually improve the school's performance. The governing body provides excellent support and challenge in equal measure, and ensures that the safeguarding of pupils is outstanding. The school's record of consistently good improvement indicates its good capacity to develop further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics to a higher level, by enabling pupils to become more involved in evaluating and improving their own learning.
- Enhance the promotion of community cohesion, by providing pupils with more opportunities to engage with pupils from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the United Kingdom and beyond.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

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Pupils' achievement is good because they are enthusiastic to learn and they work hard in lessons. They enjoy learning particularly when they have to use skills of recall, deduction and cooperation. For instance, in a Class 2 English lesson, pupils enjoyed being challenged to solve and write about the mystery of the disappearance of the school bell. They worked well, taking turns and listening attentively to each other's points of view and possible solutions to the mystery. However, pupils are not fully involved in evaluating and improving their own learning. Although attainment on entry varies from year to year within the very small year groups, discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their books show that overall, pupils make good progress, from a generally below expected starting point, during their time in the Reception Year. Good progress continues through the school. The pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Their work with specialist support staff and teaching assistants develops their self-esteem effectively and has a positive impact on their learning.

Behaviour is good and pupils show an excellent understanding of safety for themselves and others. They say, 'bullying doesn't happen here anymore', that they feel very safe and can go to any adult if a problem arises. Because pupils grow and harvest their own produce in their conservation area, they experience the benefits of healthy eating, while developing an excellent understanding of ecological issues, such as recycling. Weekly swimming lessons for all the pupils develop their water survival skills very well. Pupils explain this is very important as, 'our school is virtually surrounded by water'. They say they value the responsibilities they have to contribute to the school, such as through the school council. Such experiences enable them to develop good workplace skills and prepare them well for the future. Meaningful assemblies accelerate pupils' understanding and reflection on right and wrong, although they have too few opportunities to engage with those from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive and are characterised by good humour. Skilful questioning enables pupils to work things out for themselves and teachers promote teamwork and pupils' independent thinking well. Such good quality teaching contributes to pupils' above average attainment in English and mathematics. A stronger focus, since the last inspection, on using questions more effectively to challenge pupils to reason and solve problems has paid dividends. A larger majority now reach the higher levels in national tests and assessments. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is further enhanced by the many positive comments made by teachers in their marking. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to evaluate their own learning.

The strong focus the school places on making links across subjects, within the creative curriculum, through topics such as 'earth, wind and fire' is helping pupils develop extremely good ecological awareness and good opportunities to apply their literacy and numeracy skills well. Their enjoyment is enhanced further by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. Such opportunities enable them to develop their interests and talents well.

Parents and carers understandably speak positively about the outstanding care and support their children receive from all adults, and how this contributes exceedingly well to their children's excellent personal development. Very effective links with external agencies ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in

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their learning. In this tiny school, one or two absences have a significant effect on overall attendance figures and can mask the good work of the school in ensuring that pupils who miss learning through absence, are given individual support on their return, which enables them to make up what they have missed. This excellent practice contributes well to pupils' good academic progress. Arrangements to prepare pupils for high school are well planned and help to ensure a smooth transition to their next stage of education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Excellent teamwork and dedication from staff provides the school with clear direction and an unstinting ambition to improve. Particularly effective is the outstanding contribution of the school's business manager to ensure smooth day-to-day management, given the large teaching commitment of the headteacher. Leaders have successfully maintained the culture established in the school of care and ensuring equal opportunities for all. This is evident, for instance, in raising the level of challenge so that more pupils attain highly in English and mathematics. The governing body provides outstanding leadership and makes sure that all statutory requirements are met and often surpassed. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully in place and follow best practice guidelines. Pupils' safety has the highest profile in all of the school's work. The management and monitoring of teaching and learning, shared by all staff, is good. Partnerships with parents and carers and other agencies are good and particularly effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good overall and, although very strong within the local community, links with pupils from within the United Kingdom and globally are limited.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's learning and development gets off to a good start in this happy and fun-filled environment. They have good opportunities to learn through an appropriate diet of activities they have chosen for themselves and those they are directed to by adults. A good range of opportunities is provided, both indoors and outdoors, which develop children's physical and creative skills well. This is despite limited outdoor facilities where plans are underway for improvement. Their speaking and listening skills are developed well as they learn to share and take turns as they play. Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning and, in particular in language and calculation, and are rapidly developing into confident, independent learners. Teaching is good because planning is precise and involves all adults. They carefully record the small steps in learning that each child makes and this is used effectively to plan the next stage. Adults incorporate children's ideas and interests into their learning activities and there are plenty of opportunities for children to choose their own play.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Staff take very good care of children so that they feel very safe and happy. There are strong links with parents and carers who are well informed and involved in their children's education. Overall, children make good progress from their individual starting points.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. They unanimously say they are happy with all aspects of the school's work and its effectiveness. Parents and carers clearly favour the school's small family atmosphere and appreciate the excellent quality of relationships and care provided. Inspection evidence agrees with these views of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Thurnham Glasson Christ Church, Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 21 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 27 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	86	3	14	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	71	4	19	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	71	6	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	90	2	10	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	95	1	5	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	90	2	10	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



15 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Thurnham Glasson Christ Church, Church of England Primary School, Lancaster, LA2 0AR

I would like to thank you for the help you gave me when I inspected your school. I especially enjoyed chatting to you. Now, I would like to share with you what the inspection found out about your school. It is a good school. These are some of the best things about it.

- Reception children have lots of fun and enjoy learning through play.
- Adults take excellent care of you and you told me that you feel extremely safe. You have an excellent knowledge of how to lead a healthy life.
- You make good progress and attain above-average standards in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6.
- Your behaviour is good.
- The school provides some exciting things for you to do and learn, such as gardening or attending the film club.
- Your headteacher, business manager and members of the governing body are outstanding leaders.

To make the school even better and to help you to attain even higher, I have asked the school to:

- enable you to become more involved in evaluating and improving your own learning
- provide more opportunities for you to meet with pupils from different religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the United Kingdom and the wider world.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and to do your best to help your school become even better.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Clare Henderson

Lead inspector

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