

Howick Church Endowed Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119364
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358540
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Thornton
Headteacher	Miss Deborah Bramley
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2008
School address	Liverpool Road Penwortham, Preston Lancashire PR1 0NB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who visited 10 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed four teachers and held discussions with the chair of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at school policies, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 55 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- Why writing is a weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English.
- How effectively the needs of different groups are met, particularly those who are more able.
- The extent to which leaders have dealt with the underachievement of a minority of pupils caused by the long period of disruption to staffing.
- How accurately leaders now analyse pupils' progress and assess their attainment.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. Almost all pupils are White British. The school holds the Activemark award and has achieved Healthy Schools status. Pupils are taught in a Reception class and three classes containing pupils from mixed-year groups. Prior to September 2009 there had been a significant turnover of staff over an extended period. The headteacher was appointed just over a year ago.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has several strengths and is improving. The headteacher has worked resolutely to overcome the legacy of underachievement for a minority of pupils, caused by the disruption to staffing in previous years. She has instigated a variety of initiatives to bring about improvement, including appointing permanent staff, introducing effective systems for assessing pupils' progress and attainment and restructuring leadership and management responsibilities. There has not been time for these changes to have full impact, but the early signs are encouraging. For instance, most pupils who were previously underachieving are now making satisfactory progress and increasing numbers are making good progress. Leaders are not complacent and know there is more to do, such as ensuring all members of the governing body are fully involved in promoting school improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders and governors have a clear view of strengths and weaknesses. Priorities are identified and actions taken to bring about improvement. These are not evaluated rigorously enough to measure success and indicate if refinement is needed. All involved in the school share a commitment to raising standards and morale is high. The capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards by the end of Year 6 that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Progress is no better than satisfactory because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching between classes. This leads to some groups of pupils, particularly the more able, not always being challenged sufficiently. Pupils' attainment in reading is above average as a result of regular, well-structured guided reading sessions. Writing is a weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English. This stems from a lack of emphasis on developing pupils' skills in forming accurately-constructed sentences and too few opportunities for them to write at length across the curriculum. Pupils' mathematical calculation skills, particularly in multiplication and division, have improved and are now sound.

Pupils behave well and show much enjoyment in coming to school, which is reflected in their very high attendance. The curriculum is enlivened by a variety of enrichment activities, including a wide range of well-attended extracurricular clubs. The provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a nurturing and welcoming setting. Nevertheless, planning tends to emphasise what children are to do rather than what they are to learn, especially for the outdoor area. The pastoral care and support for pupils is a strength of the school and much appreciated by parents and carers. All safeguarding requirements are met, with the school having comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure pupils' safety and welfare. The school has a positive relationship with parents and carers, who are kept well informed about their children's progress.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment, especially in writing, to above the national average by:
 - placing more emphasis on developing pupils' skills in forming accurately-constructed sentences and providing more opportunities to practise them by writing at length across the curriculum
 - ensuring teachers consistently set work that effectively challenges different groups of pupils, especially the more able
 - using marking and feedback effectively to guide pupils to improve their work
 - making sure teaching assistants are always effectively involved in promoting pupils' learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - rigorously evaluating the action taken to bring about improvement in order to measure its success
 - making sure all members of the governing body are fully involved in promoting school improvement.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that activities always meet the needs of different groups of children, particularly the more able
 - making sure that planning emphasises what children are to learn rather than what they are to do, especially for the outdoor area.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily from their skill levels on entering school, which are generally typical for their age. Pupils show enthusiasm and enjoyment in their activities. They work well together and enjoy sharing their ideas with others. Overall progress is satisfactory. It is better in reading and pupils have above-average skills, enabling them to read fluently and with expression. Their writing skills are less well developed and they lack accuracy in writing sentences with correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. They have satisfactory mathematical calculation skills and use them successfully to solve number problems. Lessons are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure the more-able pupils always make enough progress. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) confidently to support work in other subjects. This was evident in an English lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, in which they were researching information on the internet about how developments in space and technology have shaped the future. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the extra support they receive.

Pupils enhance school life by taking on a variety of responsibilities, including being a school prefect or a buddy looking after younger pupils at lunchtime. They contribute well

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to the wider community by fundraising for local charities and taking part in local events. Pupils know about the traditions and beliefs of religions and cultures different from their own and are tolerant of the views of others. They say they feel safe in school and are adopting healthy lifestyles well. Pupils' average attainment and high attendance shows they are soundly prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Teachers teach reading well and manage guided reading sessions skilfully so that pupils make good progress in this aspect of English. They provide good opportunities for pupils to share their ideas in pairs and groups, which effectively develops pupils' speaking and listening skills. A good example of this was observed in a geography lesson in which pupils debated the importance of fair trade. Marking and feedback are not always used effectively to point pupils towards the next steps in their learning. The deployment of teaching assistants does not consistently make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers manage classrooms well to ensure they are calm places in which to learn. Relationships are good and contribute positively to the progress that pupils' make.

The curriculum has recently been amended to provide a more practical and skills-based approach to learning. It is at an early stage of development, but pupils' say their lessons are already becoming more interesting. There are too few opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills by writing at length across the curriculum. Pupils have

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opportunity to participate in a variety of educational visits to widen their horizons, such as to Fleetwood to learn about holidays in Victorian times. Partnerships with others, including the local high school, extend pupils' learning such as in drama, French and physical education. Pupils' cultural development is enhanced by a Faith Week, in which they explore beliefs and traditions different from their own and listen to speakers from the Christian, Muslim and Hindu faiths. The Activemark and Healthy Schools status reflect the school's commitment to encouraging the adoption of a healthy lifestyle.

The school is a welcoming and safe setting in which to learn. All staff are committed to the well-being of pupils and know what to do if they have concerns about the welfare of a pupil. The links with a variety of outside agencies ensure that extra support for individual pupils is available as required. The support for pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances makes an important contribution to their learning and development. The school's comprehensive procedures for encouraging attendance and effective engagement with parents and carers are key factors in pupils' consistently high attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders work well together to enthuse staff and there is a shared vision for school improvement. Actions are in place to move the school forward but currently, the evaluation of action of these actions is not sharp enough to give a clear picture of success and whether adjustment is needed. The governing body provides satisfactory leadership. Governors are supportive, but not all members are fully involved in evaluating the school's performance and planning for improvement.

Comprehensive safeguarding procedures ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff. Good quality training is provided for staff, particularly in child protection. Leaders promote equality of opportunity in a satisfactory way. The improved systems for checking pupils' progress and attainment means the school now has a clear picture of how different groups perform. This has brought to light the need to improve consistency in progress between classes, particularly for more-able pupils.

Partnerships successfully support the well-being and development of pupils who are potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances. Leaders promote community cohesion well within the school and local community. Pupils' wider understanding of the national and international community is not sufficiently promoted. The school successfully helps parents and carers to support their children's learning in different ways. Good account is taken of their suggestions and concerns.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress and enter Year 1 with average standards. They behave well and show a great deal of enjoyment in their activities. Children work well together in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing resources fairly. This was evident when they were exploring how to find and order numbers hidden in the sand tray. Staff provide activities that are practical and interesting. However, the focus is too often on what children are to do rather than what they are to learn. This is particularly the case in the outdoor area. The leader has rightly identified the need to ensure that children are always challenged effectively, particularly those who are more able. The curriculum is extended by opportunities to go on educational visits, such as to a local farm to learn about different animals. Welfare arrangements are good, with all necessary steps being taken to ensure children's safety and well-being. Good induction procedures enable children to settle into everyday school routines quickly. Parents and carers appreciate the way they are kept fully-informed of their children's progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	3

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Stage

Views of parents and carers

An above-average proportion of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. The very large majority of these were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical of many, 'I couldn't be happier with this school for my son' and, 'The sense of community with the teachers, pupils and parents is particularly welcoming and appreciated.' A very small minority of parents and carers did not agree that the school informed them of their child's progress or took account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors judge that the school takes good account of comments from parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Howick Church Endowed 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 inspection team received 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	78	11	20	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	69	16	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	58	20	36	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	67	17	31	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	64	19	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	60	21	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	58	21	38	1	2	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)	32	58	20	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	56	22	40	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	60	19	35	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	47	23	42	3	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	36	65	17	31	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	71	16	29	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.



9 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Howick Church Endowed Primary School, Preston, PR1 0NB

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is satisfactory and that:

- by the end of Year 6 you attain average standards in English, mathematics and science
- you behave well and your attendance is high
- staff make sure you are safe, both in school and on educational visits
- you have a good understanding of how to stay safe and live a healthy lifestyle
- your reading skills are above average
- in your questionnaires, you say that you enjoy school and learn a lot
- the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now is to:

- raise standards by improving your writing skills, using marking effectively to suggest how you could improve your work and making sure you all make at least good progress, especially those who find work easy
- check carefully that action to bring about improvement is successful and improve the involvement of some governors in helping the school move forward
- ensure that planning for children in Reception emphasises what they are to learn especially when they use the outdoor area.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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