

Skerton St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119534
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	358577
Inspection dates	12–13 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Suzi Clipson-Boyles

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Steven Ralston
Headteacher	Mrs Jennifer Moore
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons and eight teachers. Inspectors also visited nine parts of lessons. Discussions were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, staff and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work by looking at a range of evidence including pupils' work, pupil progress data, health and safety records, incident logs, policies and minutes from meetings. They read and analysed 48 questionnaires from parents and carers, 68 from pupils and eight from staff.

- How effectively writing is taught throughout the school.
- Whether the levels of challenge for more-able pupils are sufficiently high.
- How effective the actions taken to strengthen weaker teaching have been.
- How effectively pupils are helped to learn about different types of communities in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Information about the school

Skerton St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary is an average sized school compared to those of a similar type. It is situated in an urban area of mixed housing on the edge of the city. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that nationally, but the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is lower. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly similar to that nationally. Since the last inspection, the school has received several awards including the Healthy School status, the Activemark and the Basic Skills Award.

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

Skerton St Luke's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Some aspects of its work are good, in particular, the indoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is an extremely caring school that looks after its pupils and engages with families well. Pupils feel very safe here because they have strong and supportive relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they are identified quickly and support is tailored to help them learn effectively. Teaching assistants are well deployed to provide maximum impact on their learning. The creative curriculum enriches learning effectively by making links between different subjects. Pupils enjoy this approach because it helps them to make connections between areas of learning and to apply particular skills in different contexts. The school uses its good range of effective partnerships to maximise the benefits for pupils' well-being. This is evident in pupils' strong understanding of healthy lifestyles and the enthusiastic way that most contribute to the school and wider community. Attendance is above the national average. Before and after-school clubs are attended to maximum capacity.

Academic progress is outstanding in Reception and good in Key Stage 1. Progress is slower in lower Key Stage 2, but by the end of Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress overall. More-able pupils are achieving well in Years 2 and 6 in all subjects because teachers plan different and more challenging learning. Attainment in mathematics is going from strength to strength and is now above the national average. Attainment in writing remains weaker at the end of all three key stages, but there are signs that this is improving. A strong Christian focus is threaded through the work of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is stronger than their social and cultural understanding. Links with other communities in the United Kingdom have not yet been fully implemented. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils are welcoming, polite and considerate, but some are not able or willing to manage their own behaviour, particularly around the school corridors at break times. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to make independent contributions to their own learning, so those aspects of behaviour are underdeveloped.

The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Staff use a range of information to evaluate how well pupils are achieving. These evaluations are broadly accurate. As a result, there have been improvements since the last inspection, including better progress in Key Stage 1 and raised attainment in mathematics and science. Improvement in other areas has been slower, particularly in the strengthening of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning. Not all leaders and members of the governing body have a sufficiently strategic understanding of what needs to change and why.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing to above average, by:
 - planning smaller and more meaningful steps for pupils of different abilities
 - providing time to practise and consolidate learning before moving on to something different
 - providing time in lessons for pupils to correct and practise the improvements that teachers have made in the marking.
- Ensure that pupils in all year groups in Key Stage 2 are making at least good progress, by:
 - taking swifter action when progress is too slow as a result of weaker teaching
 - consistently planning lessons for all ability groups that have simple and measurable steps for learning
 - providing opportunities for pupils to reflect on and assess their own work.
- Raise satisfactory behaviour to good, by:
 - providing further opportunities for independent learning, so that pupils make a stronger contribution in lessons
 - teaching the small minority of disruptive pupils how to set more consistent standards for themselves and take responsibility for their own behaviour
 - ensuring that learning is consistently enjoyable and interesting so that concentration and motivation are high for all pupils.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Inspectors observed many pupils enjoying their learning, but where teachers talked to the whole class for too long there was some restless behaviour. It is clear that most pupils are keen to learn and want to do well. They follow instructions from their teachers and listen well in lessons. The extent to which pupils enjoy and achieve is satisfactory. Inspectors observed good learning and progress in many classes. Many children start school with skills that are lower than those expected for their age. Language and social skills are well below expectations for some children. During their time in Reception they make such excellent progress that the majority reach levels that are close to national averages by the start of Year 1, although writing remains slightly below. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, where apart from in writing, attainment has been steadily rising since the last inspection. Achievement in mathematics has notably improved, particularly at the higher Level 3. In Key Stage 2, there are less consistent patterns of progress. The impact of this is that pupils in Years 5 and 6 have to catch up with their learning that has been slower in previous years. Attainment in mathematics is improving and is now slightly above the national average.

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A few pupils find it difficult to take responsibility for their own behaviour, especially when moving around the school. Pupils talk about their work with confidence and pride, but do not make a strong enough contribution to directing their own learning in lessons because many lessons are too teacher-directed. Very occasionally, low-level disruptive behaviour interrupts the learning. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of healthy lifestyles are good across a range of topics. The boys who served inspectors from the salad bar were most helpful in explaining why it was a good choice! Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for various tasks such as office duty and supervising the play of younger ones at lunchtime. They also participate in a good range of community activities.

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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

All teachers have good subject knowledge and use a creative range of resources to support and extend learning. Teaching assistants are well directed so that they move the learning forward in lessons, particularly for pupils whose circumstances have made them more vulnerable and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All teachers plan different tasks for different ability levels, but in some classes these are too complex so pupils cannot always recognise what they are learning. Most teachers mark books clearly and supportively, but time is not always made for pupils to follow up the guidance in order to improve the next piece of work. Similarly, pupils are not given the opportunity to assess their own work to see where they might improve. In some lessons, teachers

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spend too long talking to the whole class. This restricts opportunities for independent learning and on occasion leads to loss of concentration by some pupils.

Learning is well supported by an effective creative curriculum and it is evident that this is having a very positive impact on raising attainment, particularly in mathematics and science. Inspectors saw Year 6 pupils working enthusiastically on data presentation because it was linked to the history of pop music. Pupils use classroom computers regularly across subjects to apply skills in meaningful contexts. The curriculum is enriched through visits and visitors. Participation rates for extra-curricular activities are extremely high, and pupils and their parents and carers say that these experiences are a considerable strength of the school.

Care, guidance and support are good, providing a safe and nurturing environment for pupils. There are many striking examples of individuals who have been helped by the school's well-organised, but sensitive approach to pastoral care. This includes much improved attendance, good reintegration after exclusion and good working relationships with parents and carers that have previously been reluctant to come in to school.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is a strong and determined role model for staff in embedding ambition and driving improvement. She galvanises actions to ensure that Skerton St Luke's provides a safe, caring and inclusive environment for its pupils. Equal opportunities are at the heart of the school's work and discrimination is tackled to ensure that achievement gaps between different groups are gradually closing. In the past, some systems for tracking pupils' progress have lacked focus, produced too much paperwork and prevented clarity in analysing progress in different classes. Newly introduced systems are starting to strengthen teachers' accountability for progress in each class. Leadership and management roles have been distributed more widely since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher predominantly focuses on day-to-day management, which is efficient and supportive to staff and pupils. However, his strategic leadership role is less well developed. A fairly new middle leadership team is extremely active and ambitious for school improvement. As a result, the pace of change is starting to increase. Much support and development have taken place to improve the quality of teaching, but this is not yet consistently good across Key Stage 2. The governing body plays a supportive role and members regularly visit the school. They receive information about the school's work, but do not participate fully in rigorous evaluation or challenge in order to hold the school to account. All safeguarding regulations and duties are met. Child protection policies are in

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line with government requirements and regularly reviewed. The school satisfactorily fulfils its duty to promote community cohesion and an action plan is in place to strengthen this provision. Developing pupils' understanding of different types of communities in the United Kingdom is the weakest area and is now an active focus for improvement.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 excellent progress and their overall outcomes are outstanding during their year in the Reception class, due to the high-quality indoor provision and to sharp assessments which inform astutely planned, challenging learning activities. The provision for learning outdoors is restricted by the layout of the building, but staff make alternative arrangements in other parts of the school grounds and beyond to compensate for this and to therefore ensure good provision overall. Staff work effectively to develop strong, supportive relationships with the children and their families. As a result, children behave outstandingly well, and have highly positive attitudes to learning and to each other. Children demonstrate a high degree of independence, making excellent choices about their learning. Learning is well planned for all areas of the curriculum and very good links are made to children's understanding of health and safety. For example, one child, who was bathing her 'baby,' explained to an inspector why it was important not let the soap go near her eyes. Similarly, children talked very knowledgably about the healthy foods that they like to eat. They very confidently share any concerns they have with adults. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and there is a common sense of purpose among the team in maximising the progress for all groups of children. All statutory welfare requirements are fully met. A good action plan has been drawn up from evaluating the provision for children. This includes detailed plans and funding for major alterations to create better facilities for outdoor learning in the coming months.

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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	1
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

The return of questionnaires from parents and carers was low and represented the views of a small minority. Those views were overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. In particular, several parents and carers said that the school is a very welcoming place and staff are very approachable. A very small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour and how it is dealt with by the school. This issue was discussed with the headteacher. Inspectors had no serious concerns about behaviour which was found to be satisfactory during the inspection. However, some improvements have been recommended in order to raise the standard from satisfactory to good or better.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Skerton St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 209 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	48	23	48	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	69	14	29	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	54	20	42	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	50	21	44	3	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	40	26	54	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	48	23	48	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	42	26	54	0	0	1	2
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)	19	40	19	40	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	44	23	48	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	33	25	52	4	8	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	33	25	52	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	19	40	24	50	1	2	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	50	21	44	2	4	1	2

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.



14 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Skerton St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Lancaster, LA1 2JH

Thank you very much indeed for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed watching you in lessons and were impressed with the way you talked to us about your school and the things that you learn. Your school gives good care, guidance and support and this helps you feel safe and happy. That is really important. There are lots of clubs after school and you enjoy all the visits and visitors that help you learn more and make it fun. Those of you who need special help with your lessons learn well and make good progress. Your attendance is above average which deserves real praise from us!

Taking everything into account, your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Your attainment is slowly getting better each year and has nearly caught up with other schools nationally. Children in Reception make excellent progress with their learning and behaviour. In the rest of the school, the progress you make varies from class to class. In some classes, we think that the teaching is not always helping you make as much progress as you could. We were very impressed with how much you know about healthy lifestyles. We also thought that the way you help with jobs around school was good. Most of you behave very well, but a few of you could try harder. We have asked the teachers to:

- help you improve your writing even more
- make sure that all pupils make enough progress in every class in Key Stage 2
- help everyone to understand and adopt good behaviour in lessons and in the corridors.

We hope that you will all want to help with these important things by trying hard and discussing things sensibly and helpfully with your teachers. I wish you every success.

Yours sincerely

Suzi Clipson-Boyles

Lead inspector

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