

Hoole St Michael CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119570
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379841
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	David Law

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	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Howard Davidson
Headteacher	Jo Duckworth
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Law

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector looked at teaching and learning in 11 lessons and five teachers were seen teaching. These lesson observations added up to five hours and 50 minutes during which time opportunity was taken to talk to pupils in class and look at work in their books. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff and the inspector listened to a number of pupils reading. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at various documents. These included the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and assessments of pupils' progress while 46 parental questionnaires were received.

Information about the school

Hoole St Michael is smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language and few from minority-ethnic groups. The school has a number of awards including Healthy Schools status and the Anti-Bullying Charter. The school meets the current floor standard. There has been a high level of staff turnover recently and the current headteacher is appointed in an acting capacity. There is on-site childcare provision but this is not managed by the governing body.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils are happy, achieve well and are keen to learn. Highly committed staff value the clear vision and drive of the acting headteacher. Governors provide excellent strategic leadership. Parents and carers are highly supportive and value the caring ethos. The school is not outstanding because teaching is not outstanding and, although progress in mathematics is good overall, too few of the more-able pupils reach higher levels.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and reach above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Progress in reading and writing is brisk. In Key Stage 2, pupils write lengthy pieces with a sense of audience. Younger pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds well and thoroughly enjoy reading.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are tolerant and courteous. They often show excellent behaviour. Attendance is above average. Pupils feel safe in school and instances of bullying are rare.
- Good teaching is underpinned by effective classroom organisation. Good assessment informs planning and pupils find lessons interesting. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and high expectations are particularly seen in the teaching of reading and writing; consequently, pupils' make good progress overall.
- Accurate self-evaluation and relentless determination to improve teaching are features of the good leadership and management. Teachers assume leadership tasks eagerly and monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. Management of performance is effective. There are robust procedures for tracking pupils' progress and action is taken promptly to arrest any underachievement. Because of this, achievement is rising, particularly in English. Training in assessment practice has improved teaching, and marking is excellent. Governors know the school well and manage performance effectively, keeping a sharp eye on standards to hold the school to account.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics, particularly so that the more-able pupils attain the higher levels by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills
 - consistently challenging the more able in their learning
 - developing role play in the Early Years Foundation Stage to more consistently support mathematical learning
 - sharing good practice about the teaching strategies that work well in the most successful lessons.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Most children start the Reception Year with knowledge and skills in line with those expected for their age. They settle well, make good progress and achieve well. Children in Reception are currently making brisk progress in writing. Achievement continues to be good as pupils move through the school to attain above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. Pupils show a love of learning and try their best. These positive attitudes support a good rate of learning in lessons. Pupils are keen to answer questions, are persistent if they encounter a problem and follow instructions well.

Pupils enjoy practical activities, for example, in a science lesson they showed excellent progress in discovering the properties of different materials and explaining why tests need to be fair. Teachers often ask pupils to talk about their ideas and they show a good ability to explain ideas. Pupils enjoy reading and show a firm grasp of the skills they have been taught. By the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time they leave the school, attainment in reading is above average. Pupils acquire good writing skills. Year 3 and 4 pupils were absorbed in writing about the River Amazon, having carefully followed the teacher's presentation, and used descriptive language exceptionally well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because learning is well matched to their needs. The school works effectively to improve boys' writing and they achieve well. Parents and carers say that the school enables children to make good progress and inspection findings agree. Pupils use and apply their reading and writing skills well but are not as capable of this in mathematics. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in national tests is above average and scrutiny of the pupils' work and the school's tracking data, together with observation of lessons, confirms that current pupils are continuing this trend.

Quality of teaching

Pupils learn well and make good progress because of good teaching. Teachers work effectively to plan a broad, good quality curriculum that pupils enjoy. Classrooms are enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work, especially in writing. Technology is used well to capture pupils' interest. In one lesson in the Year 5 and 6 class, the interactive whiteboard was used to show a clip of *Oliver Twist* which enthralled pupils and they went on to gain a secure understanding of the characters of Oliver and The Artful Dodger. Teachers organise lessons well and the best have a brisk pace so time is sharply focused on acquiring new skills and knowledge. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy using the outdoors for learning and this is well organised. However, role play is not used consistently

to promote mathematical learning. Relations are positive and teachers are adept at managing pupils' behaviour so lessons flow smoothly. Pupils respond by trying their best to reach the objectives set for them. Pupils say they find lessons interesting and this was seen in Year 2 where a group of boys were totally engrossed in using books about Italy and were keen to explain how a volcano destroyed Pompeii.

The excellent marking of work consistently shows pupils what they do well and what they should improve. Pupils say marking helps them greatly. Assessment is thorough and accurate and teachers skilfully use it to plan lessons that meet changing needs, for example in English, where detailed records are used to challenge pupils in their reading. In mathematics, the tracking of pupils' progress is used to provide intervention for those falling behind, but the more able are not always suitably challenged, and there are insufficient opportunities for these pupils to use their skills. Teachers provide good opportunities from the planned curriculum for pupils to think about the needs of others and consider the consequences of their actions. This is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. For example, pupils showed much empathy with the injustice experienced by the orphaned Oliver Twist. Parents and carers strongly agree that their children are well taught and typical comments mention the warm ethos and the efforts teachers make to promote home learning. Inspection findings support this view.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour and safety is good and this enables pupils' personal development to thrive. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions show that good behaviour is typical. In lessons it is often outstanding. Pupils' positive attitudes, their ability to concentrate and to work well with others underpins their good progress. Pupils are punctual to lessons and attendance is above average. Pupils say confidently that they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They take responsibility and are keen to help others. The Guardian Angels in Year 6 are proud to look after Reception children, by taking them into assembly and being there for them in the playground should they need a friend. Pupils can explain school rules and are keen to follow them. Most feel behaviour in the school is good although a few say that in a small number of lessons it is not as good as they would like. Behaviour management strategies are employed effectively to support pupils when required. Pupils say they feel free from bullying in any form. Policies are in place to deal with any rare instance and pupils say with assurance that adults help them if they have a problem. Parents and carers express strong confidence in the school's ability to promote good behaviour and inspection findings show this to be an accurate view. One typical comment was that pupils are happy and the school teaches values of tolerance and respect. Good behaviour and safety helps to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as pupils acquire a keen sense of right and wrong. The spiritual dimension is strong because of the school's well-established links with the local church. Acts of worship are lively and pupils' singing is a joy to hear.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good because of the sustained, ambitious and successful drive to raise achievement. There is highly effective self-evaluation and well written development plans that target areas where improvement is required. Performance management is robust and effective in sharpening classroom practice by focusing clearly on teaching and learning. Teachers are committed to the plan for continuous improvement and the actions it requires of them. They understand their leadership role and are effective in

monitoring improvements and supporting colleagues, for example, through coaching strategies. The acting headteacher shows tremendous energy having revitalised various aspects of the school's work. There has been significant professional development to improve assessment. Consequently, marking is outstanding and the tracking of pupils' progress is thorough and effective. This has energised staff and, despite changes of personnel, there is good teamwork and a shared understanding of the school's priorities and how these will be achieved. Effective teaching strategies are shared at training events and have improved classroom practice but has been less successful in relation to the teaching of mathematics. Leaders and managers have established a sense of urgency and a sharp focus on raising achievement. The impact is that attainment is rising, issues from the previous inspection have been addressed and the school is on track to meet its challenging targets. This demonstrates a good capacity to sustain improvement further.

The governing body is highly effective and well informed and has steered the school through staff changes in an astute way, for example, by brokering the secondment of the acting headteacher. Governors give excellent support and provide a sharp and relevant level of challenge when required. Underperformance is tackled firmly. For example, governors want to improve the teaching of mathematics and drive up achievement. This is a priority in the development plan.

The curriculum is good because all managers and leaders work together to ensure it is relevant, broad and balanced. It captures pupils' interest, for example through a rich range of activities in sport and music. It also effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, pupils reflected on their visit to the local church and wrote evocatively about it. Leaders and managers at all levels, and the governing body, strongly promote equality and tackle discrimination so that the school is a happy place for all. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and the child protection policy and procedures meet current requirements well. Parents and carers feel well informed and comment on the positive improvements brought by the acting headteacher. This is an accurate view.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hoole St Michael CofE Primary School, Preston, PR4 5JQ

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave me and for contributing so well to the inspection. I enjoyed my visit very much and think that Hoole St Michael is a good school.

Your behaviour is good and you work and play very well with each other. Your enjoyment of learning helps you to make good progress. You are especially good at reading and writing but you very much like other subjects too. I was delighted to see, for example, how well Years 5 and 6 conduct science experiments and how carefully they observed the affects of light on various materials. Congratulations to Years 3 and 4 whose writing about the Amazon River was full of interest. Adults in school take good care of you and this is why you feel safe when you are there. Teaching is good and lessons are made interesting for you. The headteacher, school leaders and managers and the governing body are doing a good job and work well together to make learning interesting so you achieve well.

I have asked the school's leaders to do the following to help you learn even better.

- Make sure that all of you do even better in mathematics and that more of you reach the higher levels.

You can help by telling your teachers how well you are doing and by continuing to show good attitudes and behaviour. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Law
Lead inspector

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