

Scotforth St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119533
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	363906
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Howard Roberts
Headteacher	Alison Aylott
Date of previous school inspection	December 2007
School address	Scotforth Road Lancaster Lancashire LA1 4SE
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 13 lessons over a period of six hours, taught by eight different teachers, including one from the Girls' Grammar School. They listened to pupils reading and talked with them about their enjoyment of books, and also observed one session to promote enjoyment in reading that was led by a parent volunteer; these activities extended over a further period of one-and a-half hours. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, a former School Improvement Partner, school staff and groups of pupils. They talked informally with the speech and language therapist and with a number of parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised documentation relating to pupils' achievement and school management. They also took into account the questionnaires returned by 100 pupils and 98 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Scotforth St Paul's is an average-sized primary school. It serves a stable population to the south of Lancaster city centre. Few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, belong to minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. A below average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities, but the proportion that has a statement of special educational needs is double the national average; the majority of these pupils have autistic spectrum disorder and some have complex medical problems. The school holds numerous awards including the Sportsmark, Activemark, Eco Schools Silver, International School Intermediate, and Healthy School status. It achieved the Financial Management in Schools standard in July 2010. The government floor targets for the standards reached by pupils have been met during the past three years.

A privately run out-of-school club operates on site. The club did not form part of this inspection but a report on its quality can be found 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

Overall effectiveness	1
Achievement	1
Teaching	1
Leadership and management	1
Behaviour and safety	2
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

This outstanding school enables its pupils to make consistently rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics, so that by the end of Year 6 their attainment is high. The achievement of all groups of pupils and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. This is due to the school's great strides forward since the previous inspection, in its use of assessment information to track pupils' progress and adapt the provision according to individuals' needs. The teaching is firmly based on detailed knowledge of pupils' different abilities, combined with very secure subject knowledge and moments of inspiration so that, overall, it is of exceptional quality. Most parents and carers are very appreciative of the high quality of the school's provision. Typical of their comments are, 'We are very happy with the headteacher and her enthusiastic team,' and, 'My children are really happy and progressing extremely well at the school.'

The great majority of pupils enjoy being at school and they all have a very clear understanding that they go there to learn. In lessons they listen very well, work well together and concentrate hard. Attendance levels are high. Most pupils say they feel safe in school and have confidence that any concerns, such as bullying, will be dealt with effectively. Outside the classroom, most pupils behave well but a few act boisterously and without due regard for others. This can lead to unhappiness which is out of keeping with the school's aims and with the experience of the majority.

Excellent leadership and management underpin the school's relentless efforts to enable each pupil to achieve to their potential. All staff play a strong role in school self-evaluation and improvement, ably supported and challenged by the knowledgeable and committed governing body. Skilful strategic planning, financial management and deployment of resources make an important contribution to the

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school's success.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Work with pupils and parents and carers to:
 - discover which aspects of pupils' behaviour cause them most concern
 - together, use that information to develop strategies to ensure that all pupils feel safe from harm or unhappiness.

Main report

Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve exceptionally well, not only in reading, writing and mathematics but also, for example, in sports, the kwik cricket team that are local champions, singing, information and communication technology (ICT) and art. Arresting displays of pupils' work, such as African masks, batik banners and evocative pastel drawings of the Blitz, enhance the building and demonstrate the depth of pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' attainment in reading by the age of six is above average, with many having the skills expected of seven-year-olds. By the time they leave school, almost every pupil is a fluent reader who delights in books and can use their skills equally well to find information swiftly or to uncover the subtleties of different characters in a Shakespeare play. The expertise that the school devotes to the teaching of reading reaps impressive rewards for pupils. Similarly, pupils' writing is well-constructed, imaginative and grammatically correct, as exemplified by the opening of a piece written in the character of Viola, 'Dear Diary. Today was a whirlwind of confusion....'

Most children's skills when they join the Reception class are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Over the past five years increasing numbers have joined Year 1 with above average skills and the majority of current Reception children are already competent readers, writers and mathematicians. A combination of activities, often based on books, that capture children's imagination, and highly skilled questioning from all adults, enthuse the children with excitement to find out more and to share their thinking. Such positive attitudes are very evident throughout the school as pupils of all ages follow instructions well, waste no time in getting down to work, make excellent use of opportunities to share their ideas and generally take great care with the presentation of their work. They are conscientious learners. Pupils thrive on a challenge, such as the need to make quick mathematical calculations, are clear about their targets and understand what they need to do to reach them.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with autistic spectrum disorder or other complex conditions, make excellent progress alongside their peers. This is due to the school's early, precise analysis of their needs, adaptation of the curriculum to cater for these, and the outstanding support provided by very well deployed teaching assistants. By the end of Year 6 many such pupils, and others whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, are working at

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the levels expected of all pupils nationally, providing them with a strong basis to support their future learning and well-being. Consequently, the school is very successfully closing the gap in reading and across the curriculum for pupils who start at below average levels. The words of a parent, 'At no time did my child lose confidence or belief that he could achieve and he is now working at above average levels,' confirm the highly successful impact of the school's support for individuals.

Teachers have high expectations of all pupils and provide them with the consistently good or better quality teaching that is necessary to help them make outstanding progress. Lessons start promptly and move at a good pace as teachers target their questioning very well according to pupils' different abilities. The purpose of the lesson is always clear and pupils are often involved in identifying the likely success criteria, thereby demonstrating their full understanding of what they are expected to learn. Marking almost always provides very helpful pointers for improvement and pupils see the value of homework as it is often built on in lessons. Very good quality relationships and behaviour create a high quality learning environment in which pupils are supportive of each other. Varied activities, skilful use of interactive whiteboards and teaching assistants, excellent use of subject-specific language, and frequent opportunities for pupils to assess their own and others' work ensure that learning is purposeful and enjoyable. Exceptional lessons, such as when Year 6 pupils were inspired by the wonders of Baravelle spirals to use all their mathematical knowledge to create their own patterns, provide pupils with truly memorable experiences and allow those of all abilities to feel pride in their achievements.

Such a sense of togetherness does not always extend beyond the classroom. The great majority of pupils are polite, considerate, helpful and behave very well. They are eager to take on responsibility, such as the Year 6 buddies for younger children, and are keen fund-raisers, for example, participating in a 'Walk to Africa' to support the school in Uganda with which they have links. Older pupils who have in the past experienced behaviour difficulties openly praise the way in which the school has helped them to acquire self-discipline. However, a significant minority of parents, carers and pupils express concerns about pupils' feelings of safety and the impulsive, occasionally unkind, behaviour of a small number of pupils. School records confirm that such incidents do occur. 'Play-fighting' and rough behaviour on the playground are not always nipped in the bud sufficiently swiftly. The school regularly reinforces clear messages about acceptable behaviour, indeed, Year 2 pupils led a thought-provoking assembly about bullying and responsibility during the inspection, but these do not always translate into everyday practice.

Determined leadership by the headteacher, described as 'firm but fair' by one parent, has guided the school unswervingly forward to its present success. Middle managers have taken increasing responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the school's strengths and areas for development. At the suggestion of the governing body they now report to the curriculum committee, making an excellent contribution to school improvement through the detailed information they provide. The school's proven record of sustained improvement, founded on the development of its rigorous yet simple systems to assess and track pupils' progress, demonstrates its excellent

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capacity to improve further. The tracking data clearly show the impressive way in which the rate of pupils' progress has increased over recent years. All staff work as a cohesive team in which members respect and value each others' skills and contribution. There is no hesitation in seeking outside support, whether in relation to pupils' special educational needs or to enhance the curriculum through a samba workshop, an enterprise week or a visit to the Paralympics world cup. The school successfully fulfils its commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination, enabling pupils in every year group to make exceptional progress and to attain highly, providing them with a very firm foundation on which to build their future learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Scotforth St Paul's 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 inspection team received 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 219 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	63	64	34	35	0	0	1	1
Q2 My child feels safe at school	69	70	27	28	2	2	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	46	47	42	43	4	4	4	4
Q4 The school meets my child's particular needs	47	48	44	45	4	4	3	3
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	61	62	35	36	1	1	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	51	52	43	44	3	3	1	1
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	60	61	37	38	1	1	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	45	46	48	49	3	3	0	0
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	38	39	42	43	6	6	0	0
Q10 The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	38	51	52	6	6	2	2
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	35	36	50	51	7	7	4	4
Q12 The school is well led and managed	36	37	51	52	5	5	4	4

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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Scotforth St Paul's Church of England Primary School,
Lancaster LA1 4SE**

The other inspectors and I enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for your warm welcome and, through talking with us, for helping us to understand what it is like to be a pupil at Scotforth St Paul's. I would now like to share our findings with you.

Yours is an outstanding school. This means that it provides you with an excellent quality of education which prepares you very well for the future. From the Reception class upwards you make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics so that you reach high standards in these tested subjects. We were also impressed by your artwork, your singing, and your sports and ICT skills – congratulations to the kwik cricket team! You have many different experiences that help you to enjoy learning. We were pleased to see that you work hard and that you told us that you find it fun.

One of the main reasons that you achieve so well at school is that the teaching is very well adapted to your different abilities and needs. Teachers challenge you to think quickly but also give you time to consider your answers. You have lots of opportunities to talk about your ideas and to consider how you might improve your work. In lessons you behave very well and get on well with each other but, as you told us and we saw for ourselves, occasionally some pupils' behaviour causes some of you to feel unhappy and a bit wary. So we have asked the adults to work with you and your parents and carers to decide how this can be improved. We know that you enjoy being helpful and we are sure that you, as well as the adults, will come up with some good ideas.

The senior leaders work very hard and successfully to make sure that the school keeps on improving. All the staff have your best interests at heart. They look after you well and we were pleased when you told us that you feel you can go to them with any concerns. We wish you very well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Drake
Lead inspector

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