

Pilling St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119555
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379836
Inspection dates	06–07 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Brian Holmes

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	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Edmondson
Headteacher	Pauline Tate
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2009
School address	Ladies Hill Pilling Preston PR3 6HA
Telephone number	01253 790282
Fax number	01253 790282
Email address	bursar@pilling-st-johns.lancs.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in seven lessons and observed four teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its assessment data, evidence of activities and events, information about the curriculum, safeguarding arrangements and monitoring and evaluation documents. Inspectors analysed 38 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 52 pupils' questionnaires and 9 questionnaires returned by staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is the progress of children in Reception satisfactory or good?
- Do all groups of pupils, including more-able pupils and those who join the school at different times, make consistently good progress?
- Has the introduction of the creative curriculum had a positive impact on pupils' attainment in different subjects?
- How effectively do all leaders, including governors, monitor and evaluate the impact of actions they take on pupils' outcomes?

Information about the school

Pilling St. John is a smaller than average-sized primary school serving a rural community. Since the previous inspection the school has become more popular and has significantly increased in size. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has achieved Healthy School status, Eco School status, the International School Award and is a Rights Respecting School.

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. Leaders and managers have driven the school forward well and, as a result, the school has maintained its good performance from the previous inspection. Other aspects of its work have improved, notably pupils' levels of attendance and the provision for pupils' care, guidance and support, which is a significant strength. The success of the school is reflected in its increasing popularity in the local area. A parent typically commented that the school is 'a safe, caring and happy environment where children flourish'. Good attainment and achievement and outstanding outcomes in several aspects of pupils' personal development have been maintained. Together with the outstanding provision for care, guidance and support, high levels of attendance, improvement in governance and accurate self-evaluation, there is clear evidence that the school has a good capacity to further improve its performance.

Pupils enjoy coming to school, which they describe as happy and friendly. They work and play in a harmonious school community where they have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves, and others, safe. Pupils' behaviour is good and fosters positive attitudes to learning. Their understanding of how to live healthily is outstanding with many pupils adopting healthy lifestyles and taking an active approach to healthy living by helping to grow fruit and vegetables and by serving salad in the school dinner hall at lunchtimes. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and the community through the many jobs they do around school and their work to promote safe and healthy living. For example, in the 'Chairman's Challenge' they organised a fun run for the local and wider community.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. They make good progress, although their skills in reading and writing are below the levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 to 6, effective teaching enables pupils to make good progress and reach standards above those expected at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Use of assessment data has improved since the previous inspection and it is now used well to plan learning. Pupils are involved in setting their own targets and have a good awareness of their learning. Improvements to the curriculum have given pupils increased opportunities to apply their writing, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and this has led to increased enjoyment for pupils in their learning. Achievement for more-able pupils in mathematics, while good, is not as high as in reading and writing because pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills. Leaders are

driving the school forward purposefully. Thorough monitoring and evaluation has enabled the school to identify its key priorities and take effective action to tackle them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve children's attainment in reading and writing in the Reception class, so that it is in line with what is expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1 by:
 - ensuring that planned strategies to improve early reading and writing skills have the necessary impact
 - consistently managing children's learning to enable them to take advantage of the reading corner and writing table in their independent activities.
- Improve the achievement of more-able pupils in mathematics to match that in English by:
 - providing pupils with more frequent opportunities to practice and develop their problem-solving skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from starting points below those expected overall and well below expectations in reading and writing. Outcomes are broadly in line with expectations for most children, except in reading and writing, by the time they enter Year 1. In Years 1 to 6, the progress of all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are more-able, and pupils who join the school at different times, is good. In mathematics, there are fewer pupils on track to reach higher than expected standards than in English, where there has been good improvement in pupils' attainment in writing in Years 1 to 6 since the previous inspection. Pupils' positive attitudes to, and enjoyment of, their learning are self-evident. They work enthusiastically as seen in Years 5 and 6 where pupils work collaboratively on setting the scene for a play script and then act out a short scene, demonstrating good speaking and listening skills. For the most part pupils' learning throughout the school is successful. It dips very occasionally when pupils misunderstand what the teacher expects them to do.

Pupils' good academic progress is complemented well by their personal development. Welcoming and positive behaviour makes a good contribution to learning in lessons, with pupils responding quickly to teachers' expectations. Pupils' outstanding understanding of how to stay safe contributes extremely well to their confidence as learners because they have high levels of trust in the adults around them. Their strong understanding of how to live healthily and the outstanding contribution they make to the life of the school and the community illustrate further the development of their personal skills. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities in school, as members of the school council and Eco committee with older pupils acting as 'buddies' to younger pupils in the playground. Their good level of basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT shows that they are well-prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Pupils have a good awareness of other cultures and faiths through their links with other schools and through the Africa Project they undertook.

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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is characterised by thorough planning to link subjects, secure subject knowledge that is applied well, high expectations and good use of assessment to support learning. Teachers make lessons challenging for all groups of pupils, as seen in a Years 3/4 literacy lesson where pupils were fully engaged in writing instructions for pet recipes. The use of other adults to support pupils' learning is a strength. They support different groups of pupils in a variety of ways – providing targeted support, checking progress and leading sessions focused on pupils' learning to link sounds and letters. Assessment is used effectively to check pupils' understanding and marking makes clear to pupils what they have achieved and sets clear targets for what they need to do next. Very occasionally, teachers do not sufficiently target pupils through questioning to check their understanding and this slows progress slightly. Pupils have good opportunities to check their own work, which gives them a clear understanding of their learning and how to improve.

The curriculum underpins pupils' learning well. The embedding of the creative curriculum has fostered pupils' enjoyment of learning. Whole-school projects, such as Recycle Rangers and Save the Whale, have stimulated pupils' interest and provided them with good opportunities to learn independently and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across all subjects. Writing for different purposes and in different subjects has improved pupils' attainment. However, in mathematics, analysis of pupils' work shows that not enough attention is given to improving pupils' problem-solving skills in their numeracy lessons. There is good enrichment of pupils' learning through planned visits and experiences, for example, selling the fruit and vegetables they grow at the local farmers' market. Pupils also have good

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

opportunities to take part in sports and music, as when Key Stage 1 pupils took part in a concert with other schools.

The school is highly inclusive and pupils are extremely well cared for. Pupils’ care and welfare are at the heart of the school’s ethos and staff know pupils extremely well, forming trusting and friendly relationships. There are excellent systems to support pupils’ different needs, for example, to check their attendance and to induct pupils who join at different times so as to help them and their parents and carers to settle quickly in the life and ways of the school. These result in both pupils, and their parents and carers, having high levels of confidence in the care provided.

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?

Leaders and managers are continuing to drive the school forward. There is a clear vision and commitment to achieving high standards by pupils, both academically and in their personal development. Since the previous inspection, there has been a focus on improving attainment in writing and pupils’ learning through the creative curriculum. Both initiatives have had a positive effect of the quality of education provided. Evaluation is thorough, with effective systems for checking pupils’ performance and the quality of provision. The school promotes equality well. It is a harmonious community where pupils get on well with each other. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils who have arrived since the last inspection as the number on roll has increased make the same rates of progress as that of other pupils.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school’s areas for development. It is fully involved in checking the school’s performance and holds the school to account well. Arrangements for safeguarding are good and meet all current requirements. They are supported by clear and effective procedures, with exemplary child protection procedures. There are outstanding partnerships to develop pupils’ learning, particularly the links with environmental agencies and universities to improve pupils’ understanding of, and contribution to the local and wider community. The promotion of community cohesion is good. Pupils’ understanding extends beyond the immediate locality through their work with other schools and their visits to schools with pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
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	2
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

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress but by the time they enter Year 1 outcomes are still below expectations in reading and writing. Adults work effectively as a team to provide a good quality of learning and good leadership has identified effective strategies, based on accurate assessment, to improve children’s reading and writing skills and accelerate progress. However, these methods have been introduced recently and the school has not yet had time to check if they are working fully. Children particularly enjoy the role-play area, which has a significant impact in improving their speaking and listening skills. Children’s learning is not always managed effectively to enable them to participate fully in the other activities that are on offer to improve their early reading and writing skills; the reading corner and the writing table are not always used well. Good use is made of the outdoor area, with a well-planned range of activities to complement indoor learning. Children are well cared for and feel safe and secure. As a result, they are happy and settled and behave extremely well, sharing resources well with each other. Children enjoy playing on the bikes outdoors and working independently on the computer. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding when talking about the role of the health centre in their role-play and playing simple counting games.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers who returned a questionnaire said that they are very happy with their children's experiences at school and feel that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe. A few parents and carers feel that the school does not sufficiently inform them about their children's progress or takes their concerns into account. Inspectors found that the school has clear procedures in place to inform parents about pupils' progress and to take account of parents' and carers' concerns. In the vast majority of cases, these procedures work well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Pilling St John'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 inspector received **38** completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	76	8	21	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	84	6	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	53	11	29	4	11	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	58	11	29	3	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	24	63	9	24	1	3	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	58	10	26	2	5	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	74	8	21	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)	22	58	9	24	2	5	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	61	10	26	0	0	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	63	10	26	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	61	9	24	4	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	68	8	21	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	68	8	21	0	0	2	5

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and is 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 up 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 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.



Monday 10 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pilling St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Preston, PR3 6HA

Thank you for being so polite, welcoming and friendly when we inspected your school recently. I enjoyed my time at Pilling St. John, particularly talking to you. We know that you enjoy being there.

Pilling St. John is a good school with many strengths. You told us that the school is a happy and friendly place. We were impressed by your excellent attendance, your excellent understanding of how to stay safe and live healthily and by your good behaviour. Your teachers are good and you make good progress in your learning to reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. You are extremely well cared for and older pupils enjoy their role of looking after younger pupils. You like your learning and enjoy the activities that are on offer in lessons and through the many extra activities that you take part in. You make an excellent contribution to the school and the community through the jobs you do, particularly all the things you do for the environment and the Pilling Fun Run that the school council organised.

We are asking the school to improve the achievement of more-able pupils in mathematics by giving them more opportunities to use their problem-solving skills to improve learning. We have also asked the school to improve the achievement of children in Reception in reading and writing so it is as high as it is in other schools by the time children enter Year 1.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard, behaving well and doing your best to help the school improve further.

With very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Holmes
Lead Inspector

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