

Grindleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119686
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	395745
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2012
Lead inspector	Joanne Olsson HMI

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	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah McEvoy
Headteacher	Maureen Stansfield
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Joanne Olsson

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. Her Majesty's Inspector observed teaching and learning in seven lessons led by four teachers. Two of these lessons were joint observations with the headteacher. Additional visits were made to classrooms to observe provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the teaching of reading. The inspector observed pupils at play and during lunchtime and heard pupils read. Meetings were held with staff, different groups of pupils, members of the governing body, the headteacher and middle leaders and managers. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' attainment and progress and pupils' books. She considered the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 27 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than found nationally. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is lower the national average. This includes those pupils who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs. More pupils move into the school throughout the academic year than in other schools. The school does not meet the current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has received the Activemark and the Eco-School Silver 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	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 which provides well for pupils' academic and personal well-being. Its overall effectiveness is not outstanding because pupils do not make rapid progress from their starting points. Nonetheless, pupils thrive in this nurturing school so they are prepared fully for the next stage of their education. Most parents and carers would recommend the school to others. The positive views of many are summed up in the comment 'What a wonderful and special school!'
- Pupils make good progress from their broadly average starting points and leave Year 6 with attainment levels that are typically above the national average. Staffing turbulence led to below average achievement in 2011. Inspection evidence confirms the school has recovered quickly from this dip. Writing is improving quickly, although it is relatively weaker than reading and mathematics. Some pupils have gaps in their spelling and handwriting skills. The quality of pupils' writing in other subject areas does not always reflect the best they can do.
- Teaching is good on a day-to-day basis because of trusting relationships, effective teaching strategies and a lively curriculum which meets pupils' needs and interests.
- Pupils care about each other and value differences. Their respectful behaviour and strong sense of community leads to a safe school where learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and they know how to keep themselves safe.
- The headteacher's drive for improvement is shared effectively across the school. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good because it has led to sustained improvements over time. Systems to check the work of the school are effective but they do not involve all key leaders fully.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in writing, by:
 - ensuring weaknesses in handwriting and spelling are systematically eradicated
 - ensuring teachers' marking is more precise in identifying what pupils need to do to improve their work and pupils consistently respond to the written feedback they receive
 - ensuring the quality of pupils' writing across the curriculum matches the work they produce in their English lessons
 - ensuring pupils are given opportunities to discuss their ideas before beginning their tasks
 - ensuring an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated tasks both indoors and outside in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Enhance leadership and management by ensuring all middle leaders and managers have a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are confident and articulate learners who are willing to share their ideas and work hard. In a Years 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, pupils were absorbed in a range of activities related to directions and angles. They worked with total concentration to independently solve the challenging problems. Their enjoyment was clearly evident in their groans of protests as the lesson ended. Reception children showed high levels of curiosity and imagination as they made boats to explore floating and sinking. They used their knowledge of the world very well in their designs so they all achieved success. Activities such as these promote pupils' love of learning and enable them to flourish because they are purposeful and exciting. Pupils are willing to persevere because they relish a challenge, take pleasure in finding solutions and enjoy celebrating their achievements.

Most pupils, parents and carers agree that pupils learn a lot in lessons and make good progress. Inspection evidence confirms pupils make better than expected progress from their starting points. Children enter the Reception Year with varying levels of ability, which fluctuate year-on-year depending on cohort size. Overall, what children know and what they can do is broadly typical for their age. They make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they are well equipped to tackle the Key Stage 1 curriculum. Pupils continue to make good progress from this point so that attainment by the end of Year 6 is typically above average. Achievement fell in 2011 because pupils made less than expected progress across Key Stage 2 to reach lower than average attainment levels in writing and mathematics. Pupils' attainment in reading was broadly in line with national expectations by the time they left the school. Some pupils reached the levels expected for their age, but too few gained the higher levels. Consequently, the school did not meet the current floor standards. Previous staffing turbulence meant some pupils had gaps in their learning which limited their overall progress.

School-based data, lesson observations and pupils' books show achievement has swiftly recovered to match previous strong performance. This means the majority of pupils are working within or above age-related expectations. More-able pupils are making good progress from their higher than average starting points. As a result, many have already attained the level they are expected to reach by the end of the academic year. Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs make equally good progress in their learning. This is because they receive effective support in class and during small group catch-up activities.

Pupils' achievement in writing is improving quickly across the school. Pupils can write for a range of purposes for sustained periods of time. Nonetheless, some pupils have weak handwriting and spelling skills which limits the overall quality and quantity of the work they produce. Younger pupils have a good understanding of the sounds that letters make so they are willing to tackle new words. They read with increasing fluency and confidence. Pupils read regularly to adults at home and at school so that they have a good knowledge of different authors and they enjoy books. Pupils' mathematics skills are systematically built on as they move throughout the school so they have a good grasp of number. Pupils have many opportunities to use their writing skills across the curriculum, but this is less well developed for mathematics. The quality of pupils' writing in other subject areas does not always match that found in their English books.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers and the overwhelming majority of pupils agree that teaching is good. Inspection evidence confirms that teaching is good on a day-to-day basis and there are no significant weaknesses between subjects or age groups. Improvements to the way teachers assess pupils' skills and knowledge mean that planning is shaped to meet the needs of different groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Strong subject knowledge enables teachers to deliver taxing activities which encourage pupils to think for themselves and work independently. Good use is made of starter activities to recap on previous learning and capture quickly pupils' interests. This was evident in an English lesson where pupils had to rapidly sort text extracts into different reading genres. Teaching is at its best when every pupil is provided with an exciting task that precisely matches their academic needs. Teaching becomes less effective when pupils have to sit and listen for too long or when they have insufficient opportunity to talk about their ideas before starting their tasks or responding to questions.

Adults strive to ensure Reception class children can access all areas of learning within a limited classroom environment. Good questioning and regular assessment means provision in this area of the school is good. Adult-led activities are successful because they capitalise on children's interests and curiosity. Nonetheless, adult-led tasks are not always sufficiently well balanced with opportunities for children to direct their own learning in the classroom or the outdoor area.

Respectful relationships and a broad curriculum underpin pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' English and mathematics books are thoroughly marked and provide guidance to help pupils improve. This good practice is less well developed in other curriculum areas. The feedback pupils receive is not always precise enough to move their learning forward at a quicker pace. Some pupils regularly respond to the feedback they receive but this is not consistent across the school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All of the parents, carers and staff who responded to the questionnaires and the large majority of pupils agree there is a good standard of behaviour in the school. A small minority of parents, carers and pupils disagree that behaviour in lessons is good. Inspection evidence shows pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around school on a day-to-day basis. Pupils are polite and courteous individuals who know how the school expects them to behave. They are consistently respectful to each other and to adults so that they listen attentively and follow instructions. School records indicate pupils rarely need to be reminded to check their behaviour. This is because behaviour is well managed in a welcoming and caring ethos. Effective partnerships mean pupils who find managing their behaviour more challenging are supported fully. Consequently, behaviour is improving over time. During the inspection, behaviour in lessons was never less than good. However, some pupils are passive learners. A very small number of pupils take part in low-level chatter when they have to sit and listen for too long or they do not have enough opportunity to share their ideas

Staff, pupils, parents and carers unanimously agree that pupils feel safe at school. Most agree that the school deals well with all types of bullying. Different groups of pupils say that bullying hardly ever happens. Pupils know what to do if they are being bullied or witness bullying. They have the upmost confidence in the staff who care for them to resolve any issues. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying related to disability or race and an increasing understanding of why homophobic name-calling is unacceptable. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in school and at home. Older pupils talk convincingly about the dangers associated with smoking, alcohol and substance misuse so they are well placed to make sensible choices as they mature. They have a good understanding of cyber-bullying and know what to do to protect themselves when using personal computers. Pupils' evident enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average levels of attendance.

Leadership and management

The headteacher's ambition for the school is underpinned by effective self-evaluation and secure planning for future improvement. Members of staff are unanimously positive about all aspects of the school. This means there is a common sense of purpose and a shared drive to succeed. These strong features, in addition to the school's success in tackling issues from the previous inspection, mean there is good capacity for further improvement. Partnerships are used to exploit the advantages of a small school and to minimise potential barriers. In particular, the close partnership with a local primary school is enhancing all aspects of school life. Members of both governing bodies work together on common issues and staff from both schools take part in joint training and share their expertise. Opportunities for pupils in each setting to work and play together is enriching their social skills and helping them to look beyond their familiar surroundings. Positive relationships with parents and carers are fostered through regular communication and opportunities to visit classrooms each morning and share pupils' work.

Teachers' performance is effectively managed because it is reviewed regularly and teachers receive clear feedback on how to improve their practice. Professional development is sharply tailored to whole school and individual need. Although relatively new to their posts, middle leaders have had a positive impact in driving forward improvements, by auditing the needs of staff and providing appropriate training and support. They are becoming increasingly

involved in monitoring activities but have had less opportunity to evaluate teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

Members of the governing body make a strong contribution to the school's effectiveness. Involvement in first-hand monitoring activities and an astute understanding of performance data mean they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders and managers are quick to tackle weaknesses. Pupils' achievement has swiftly recovered from the dip in 2011 because of concerted actions to improve the systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Consequently, the school is alert to any pupil at risk of underperforming. The school provides well for equality of opportunity because there is little variation between groups and there are very few incidents of harassment. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

The curriculum has been effectively tailored so that it meets the needs of most pupils. Good account is taken of pupils' prior learning so skills are progressively built on as pupils move up a year group but often stay within the same class. Topics are matched to pupils' interests and make learning relevant. For example, pupils are finding out about the Titanic which reflects current national interest. Visits, visitors and themed weeks are used to widen pupils' experiences and deepen their learning. Provision for pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is underpinned by a strong ethos of valuing and respecting individuals. Topics enable pupils to explore different faiths and cultures while links with a school in Africa mean pupils have opportunities to find out about diversity. The well-structured assemblies enable pupils to reflect on their own thoughts and consider the feelings of others.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



11 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Grindleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Clitheroe, BB7 4QS

It was a real treat to see so many happy and confident pupils when I recently came to inspect your school. It was lovely to speak with so many of you and to observe how well you worked and played together. Thank you for being so friendly and willing to share your views with me. This really helped me to find out what it is like to be a pupil at Grindleton. You attend a good school. These are the main things I found out during the inspection.

- You make good progress over time so that your attainment is usually above average by the time you leave school. Your achievement in writing is improving quickly.
- You are keen learners. You work hard and try to do your best.
- Your behaviour during the inspection and over time is good. You care about the people in your school and value each other's differences. This means you are kind and considerate, making your school a happy and safe place.
- You feel very safe in school. You have a good understanding of how to keep yourself safe and you know about different types of bullying. Your attendance is above average. Well done!
- Your teachers are very good at making your learning interesting and fun.

To get even better, I have asked the people in charge of your school to help you make greater gains in your learning by asking you to make sure your writing is always the best you can produce. I have also asked teachers to help you to improve more quickly by giving you clearer feedback on your work. Finally, I have asked them to think about the ways they check on teaching and how well you are learning.

It really was a pleasure to meet you.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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