

Aspull Church Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106518
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	377417
Inspection dates	30–31 May 2012
Lead inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Barber
Headteacher	Jenny Clarke
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Frank Carruthers
Peter Mather

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons or parts of lessons taught by seven teachers as well as by teaching assistants. The inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 2 and 6 and observed teaching sessions of letters and sounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' work was inspected and observations were made of pupils' behaviour at play and around school. The inspectors held meetings with staff, parents and carers, a group of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation document, the school improvement plan, records of monitoring teaching and learning, and attendance and behavioural records. Inspectors analysed 78 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those returned by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school. It is a voluntary aided, joint Anglican/Methodist school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average. There is a range of need, including severe learning difficulties, autism and speech and language difficulties. The school exceeded current floor standards for attainment which are minimum standards expected by the government for pupils in Year 6. The school has gained several awards including the Eco-Schools Silver award, Healthy School status, Rights Respecting School award, the Arts Mark (Gold) and Sports Gold Mark. Crackerjacks, which provides before- and after-school care and holiday provision, is subject to a separate inspection. The report is available on the Ofsted website. There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection.

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	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well, have excellent attitudes to school and their behaviour is outstanding. The school benefits from the high-quality leadership skills of the headteacher. The school is not yet outstanding because not enough of the teaching is outstanding and so at times opportunities are missed to maximise pupils' learning.
- Children settle into the Reception class quickly and make rapid progress in all areas of learning, especially in their personal development, and language and literacy skills. Good progress continues in all year groups so that attainment is well above average in English and mathematics when pupils leave Year 6. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make great strides in their learning.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan carefully for the different levels of ability in their classes. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. However, when working independently or in small groups, not all pupils make the best progress possible.
- A vital element in the pupils' good learning and achievement is their excellent behaviour. They take pride in their work and respond positively to teachers' challenges and expectations. They report that they feel safe in school and have a very secure understanding of how to stay safe. Attendance is well above average and punctuality to school is excellent.
- Leadership and management, including managing the performance of staff, are good. Outstanding aspects are the vision and drive to improve, and partnerships with parents and carers. Staff are developing a vibrant curriculum that is relevant to pupils' experiences and stimulating. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well overall but pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in society today is under-developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enact the vision the school has to improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - sharing best practice in school
 - ensuring all groups of pupils make the best possible progress in all parts of lessons.
- Improve pupils' awareness and understanding of cultural diversity to help them prepare to be effective citizens in today's society.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all children start in the Reception class having had some pre-school experiences in local nurseries. Their skills on entry are mostly in line with those expected for their age with very few below. The classroom and outdoor areas provide the children with excellent opportunities to thrive and learn. For example, children cooperated well to build from cardboard boxes a tower that was stable and as tall as possible. They made lists of animals they found hidden on their 'campsite'. They love telling stories and writing them in story maps. They quickly make progress linking letters to the sounds they make. By the end of the year, almost all children have skill levels in line with, or above, those expected.

Pupils' reading skills continue to develop well in Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 attainment is above average. Their good awareness of the combinations of letters and the sounds they make helps them to write well. So when pupils in Year 2 thought of things to compare to a portrait of the Queen, they were able to follow this with good attempts at spelling words such as 'wavy', 'sparkling' and 'crystals'.

In Key Stage 2, progress for almost all groups of pupils continues to be better than that expected for groups nationally. For example, both boys and girls do well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do better than expected. The parents and carers of these pupils are especially pleased at how their children take part fully in lessons and receive the attention of teaching assistants that they need. The gap between the progress made by pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and others is narrowing. In general, pupils' learning is good, though there are times in lessons when pupils are not fully engaged in tasks. Reading skills are generally well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils read across a wide range of fiction and non-fiction. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is well above average, although it has been higher in English than in mathematics in the last two years. The school has taken action to improve learning in mathematics, so that pupils are able to use their number skills more effectively to solve everyday problems. This is beginning to have the desired impact across standards and progress in all year groups.

Quality of teaching

The majority of the teaching seen by inspectors was good. There was no inadequate teaching and there was one example of outstanding teaching. This sample broadly confirms the views of parents and carers and the findings of the school's own monitoring of teaching

and learning, although senior staff have found a higher proportion of the teaching to have outstanding features than inspection findings indicate.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. This was evident, for instance, in a lesson on art and design in Key Stage 2. The teacher's expertise and choice of stimulating resources on a Caribbean theme helped the pupils to mix colours very well and talk knowledgeably about their ideas. Teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve, evident, for instance, in the standards of presentation in pupils' workbooks. The teaching of letters and sounds is a real strength and the very good pupil outcomes reflect its effectiveness. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and take a lead in addressing any pupil under-achievement. Those working in a one-to-one situation with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make a major contribution to pupils' progress. For example, the confidence of one pupil was enhanced so well that he was able to make a positive contribution when the teacher was asking questions of the whole class. The marking of pupils' work commends their efforts and gives clear guidance for improvement. In the best examples, pupils respond to the feedback, and follow-up exercises indicate how improvements have been made.

Despite good planning to cater for the needs of all pupils, there are occasions in lessons when some pupils do not make as much progress as they might. These occur most often when pupils are working alone or in small groups. In general, groups with an adult input make better progress. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, some pupils, when they were expected to work independently, did not get on with their task and write enough sentences describing the Queen. Similarly, on two occasions in Key Stage 2 lessons, expectations for what pupils should achieve were high but the teachers did not provide sufficient guidance about strategies to use in order to speed the pace of learning. As a result, time was not used to maximum effect.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspection of the school's behaviour logs confirms the findings of this inspection and the views of parents and carers that high standards of behaviour have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils are very polite and frequently praised for their behaviour and attitude when out of school on trips or when involved in local sports events. The behaviour management policy is effectively carried out and all pupils understand procedures. They respond extremely well and as a result their behaviour contributes significantly to the quality of their learning. Pupils report that bullying is not a concern for them. An indication of the school's good practice is the way lunchtimes are split so that Year 6 pupils are available to take on monitoring roles and play with children in the Reception Year and pupils in Key Stage 1. This helps towards the friendly, welcoming atmosphere in school. Pupils learn about the impact of different types of bullying that might affect them. Older pupils in particular talk with confidence about what they would do in unsafe situations, including those relating to the internet. Racist or homophobic incidents are extremely rare. Pupils are kept safe in school. Through lessons of personal and social education, pupils are taught how to be safe and look after one another. Levels of attendance have risen in the last three years and the rate for the current year is well above average at 96.7%. Unauthorised absence has fallen as a result of the school's effective strategies to reduce absence through taking holidays during term time.

Leadership and management

A very strong senior leadership team drives forward school improvement highly effectively. For example, the system tracking pupils' progress results in a close analysis of all data and identification of aspects of achievement to be improved. The improvement plan highlights the findings of the school's self-evaluation process very effectively and has prioritised boys' writing and the problem-solving skills of all pupils in mathematics. Staff training dovetails well with the school's priorities. Procedures to manage the performance of staff clearly identify pupils' progress as a key driver. The monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders is effective and points for development are followed through appropriately. Middle managers share the vision for the school and contribute well to decision-making. Linking pairs of teachers to share best practice is beginning to enhance staff confidence and improvements to provision. This has yet to have maximum impact on pupils' learning, however. The governing body provides a good level of support and challenge for senior leaders. As a result, the school's capacity to sustain high levels of performance and improve teaching is excellent.

The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is at the heart of all its work. All pupils are welcomed into school and discrimination is tackled very effectively. Pupils respond by their excellent relationships with one another and adults. All elements of safeguarding of pupils, the safe recruitment of staff and child protection are robust and ensure pupils' welfare and safety. Links with parents and carers are especially effective. They consist not only of regular letters of information regarding events and the curriculum but workshops and open days when parents and carers are given insight into how subjects are taught. Homework assignments also encourage parental/carers' involvement. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of these links. As one wrote, 'We feel very much our son's education is a partnership with ourselves.' Links with local schools and churches also have great benefit for pupils' personal and social development.

The curriculum has been a focus for development in order to link subjects better and generate memorable experiences for pupils under the headings of community, creative arts and spiritual development. This is having a strong impact on pupils' enthusiasm for learning and makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Good links have been established with schools overseas and mean pupils' awareness of the needs of children in Third World countries is clearly understood. However, their understanding of the diverse cultures within British society is less well developed.

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.



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Aspull Church Primary School, Wigan, WN2 1QW

It was a great pleasure to inspect your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how you are getting on. On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to share with you what we found.

You go to a good school. The youngest children get off to a good start and you all make good progress. This is because you are taught well and you behave exceptionally well. By the time you leave school, your skills of reading, writing and mathematics are very good. Well done! You told us you feel safe in school, how much you enjoy what you learn about in lessons and how you know your targets and what you need to do to improve your work. Your headteacher, senior teachers and the governing body do a good job. The staff make sure you all have good opportunities to study a wide range of interesting topics.

Part of my job is to identify how the school can be even better. I have asked the staff to:

- make sure that you all make the best possible progress in lessons, for example when you are working by yourselves or in a small group without an adult to supervise you
- share their ideas with one another about what it is that makes lessons high quality
- help you all to understand how there are different cultures and faiths in our country today.

Carry on working hard and doing your best for one another. I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Frank Carruthers
Lead Inspector

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