

Slyne-with-Hest, St Luke's, Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119542
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	395488
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Wall

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jason Bain
Headteacher	Paul Bowden
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Wall
Gordon Alston

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 lessons taught by seven members of staff. A sample of pupils' written work was also inspected. Pupils' conduct during lessons, at playtimes and at lunchtimes was observed. The inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's evaluation of its effectiveness; the school development plan; attendance and behavioural records; and minutes of meetings of the governing body. The inspectors analysed 116 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

The school is about the same size as most primary schools nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has a very stable pupil population with very few joining or leaving at other than normal times. There has been significant disruption to staffing in some Key Stage 2 classes since the time of the previous inspection. The school meets the current floor standards; these are the minimum standards expected by the government for pupils' attainment and progress.

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. It is improving securely because leaders and managers are making sure that relative weaknesses, such as the progress made by higher-attaining pupils in mathematics and writing, are tackled rigorously. The school is not outstanding because not enough teaching is outstanding and, as a result, pupils' achievement is good. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very happy with the education the school provides and almost all would recommend it to other parents and carers.
- Children make rapid and secure progress in Reception and in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, disruption to the continuity of teaching in the past held back progress, especially for higher-attaining pupils. As staffing has settled, progress has accelerated. The achievement of all pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs, is now good and improving.
- Teaching is good. The proportion of teaching that is outstanding is not yet high enough to secure the best possible progress. Teaching generally makes effective use of assessment data to set tasks that are appropriate to most pupils' needs and abilities. However, the level of challenge for higher-attaining pupils is not consistently high enough. Teaching is supported by an outstanding curriculum that plays a pivotal role in developing pupils' outstanding levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. Pupils say how very safe they feel in school. Attendance levels are well above national averages.
- Good leadership and management, including a dedicated and effective governing body, evaluate the effectiveness of the school accurately. They use the outcomes astutely to drive up the quality of teaching and to inform the management of performance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and thus accelerate progress and raise achievement even further, especially for higher-attaining pupils, by:
 - making sure that the teaching is always challenging enough to meet all pupils' needs and abilities
 - ensuring that teaching is consistently lively and varied to engage pupils fully and actively in their learning
 - improving the consistency of marking and tracking pupils' progress so that pupils are always clear about what they need to do to improve their work in order to reach challenging targets.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In lessons pupils of all ages are keen to join in and give of their best. They contribute their thoughts and ideas willingly and eagerly. Pupils work well in pairs and small groups where they listen to each other respectfully. Pupils enjoy learning, although occasionally the concentration of higher-attaining pupils wanes and their progress slows. This occurs when teaching lacks the necessary pace and appropriate level of challenge to fully engage and stimulate pupils.

Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage has declined somewhat from being generally above age-related expectations to being currently broadly in line with expected levels. In the Early years Foundation Stage, children make rapid and secure progress because teaching and the curriculum match their needs very closely.

Pupils continue to make rapid progress in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, attainment is consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment has dropped from previously exceptionally high levels at the end of Key Stage 1. This is because leaders and managers have tightened assessment procedures so that teacher assessments reflect more accurately pupils' achievement.

Progress across Key Stage 2 has slowed somewhat over time, chiefly because of disruption to staffing. Staffing is now settled and progress is accelerating rapidly as a result. The proportion of pupils attaining expected levels in national end of Key Stage 2 tests is consistently well above average. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels, although above average, is not as high as it could be, especially in writing and mathematics. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, show a rapidly improving picture with secure growth in the proportion of pupils set to attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics. This is because of decisive and effective actions taken by leaders and managers. These include providing a much sharper focus on identified weaknesses such as pupils' skills in mental calculations and providing more opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum. Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 has been, and remains, well above average.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and improving progress because of the effective support they receive.

Parents and carers justifiably think their children make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. When the level of challenge is appropriately high, all pupils, including the more-able pupils, make excellent progress. In an outstanding Year 6 science lesson, for example, pupils worked with fascination on the properties of carnivorous plants. A group of higher-attaining pupils took pride in explaining lucidly to the inspector not only how carnivorous plants attract and catch their prey but that, 'These plants can digest insects and small rodents because they produce a range of enzymes that enable the plants to break down the cellular structure of living organisms.' The teaching of reading skills, especially the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is good. It enables pupils to make good progress.

However, not all teaching is as successful in challenging pupils' thinking, especially that of higher-attaining pupils. Some teaching lacks the necessary challenge, pace and variety to keep all pupils fully on task. This acts as a brake on accelerating progress at a faster rate. Although the situation is improving, some pupils are unclear about their targets and the steps they need to take to improve their work further. Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly but their comments are inconsistent in showing pupils what they need to do to improve. Pupils appreciate the introduction of 'target ladders' that are helping them understand the progress they are making and what is expected of them, but it is too early for the impact to be felt fully.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported very effectively in lessons by a team of able and dedicated support assistants. As a result they enjoy learning and make good and improving progress.

During the inspection, themed teaching about the Olympics across the curriculum provided solid evidence for how effectively the curriculum has been developed to raise attainment in numeracy and writing. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils thoroughly enjoyed pretending to take part in an archery contest by launching plastic darts at a target. They used the numbers scored to complete a range of challenging calculations in groups with impressive tenacity and levels of engagement.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary. It makes a profound contribution to the school's exceptionally orderly and harmonious environment for work and play. School records show that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare and that, when they occur, they are dealt with swiftly, sensitively and effectively. School records also show that pupils who join the school with a history of challenging behaviour are supported outstandingly well. They learn to control their own behaviour and live up to the high expectations set by the school. Pupils comment that bullying of any kind is very rare. 'Occasionally we may fall out with one another but teachers soon sort it out and we are all good friends again very quickly', is a typical comment. Pupils treat disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs with unerring respect so that they are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Pupils comment that they feel very safe in school because, 'Everyone looks after us and there is always someone to turn to for help or support if we need it.' Pupils are exceptionally supportive and caring. They talk knowledgeably about what constitute unsafe situations and how to avoid them or what they should do to deal with them. For example, they talk with impressive knowledge about road safety, especially what they need to be aware of when riding their bicycles. Pupils understand the dangers inherent in using the internet and appreciate what the school teaches them about using it safely and responsibly.

Attendance levels are consistently high and reflect pupils' very positive attitudes to school and learning. The large majority of parents and carers agree that there is a good standard of behaviour in school.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders are provided with strong and knowledgeable support from the governing body that is increasingly effective in holding the school rigorously to account. Leaders and managers evaluate the effectiveness of the school accurately and use the outcomes to drive improvement effectively. For example, they are successfully tackling the need to raise the achievement of higher-attaining pupils with the result that attainment is rising securely. Leaders and managers monitor the quality of teaching regularly. They link the outcomes effectively to inform performance management and target professional development. Disruption to staffing in Key Stage 2 has been managed effectively to minimise any ill effects. A legacy of some lower attainment, however, is being tackled with a sharp and effective focus. As a result attainment has been restored to above average and progress improved. The success of such actions demonstrates the school's good capacity for continuing improvement.

The outstanding curriculum supports learning very effectively. Topic and themed work has been refined to provide pupils with a wider range of opportunities to develop their skills in writing and mathematics across subjects. The impact is seen in rising attainment and accelerated progress in both subjects. The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities that are pivotal in supporting their personal development and their outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils not only learn the importance of respect and tolerance but put them into practice in their everyday school lives. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school's orderly, caring and harmonious learning environment.

Leaders and managers are deeply and successfully committed to providing equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. All pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs are fully included in the life of the school. Targeted actions are closing gaps in achievement.

Leaders and managers have forged strong links with parents and carers with the result that nearly all value the school highly and are engaged well in their children's learning.

Leaders and managers give a high and effective profile to safeguarding. All procedures and policies for safeguarding are fully in place and give no cause for concern

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.



2 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Slyne-with-Hest, St Luke's, Church of England Primary School, Lancaster, LA2 6JL

Thank you for your warm welcome during the recent inspection of your school.

You go to a good school that is improving rapidly. It provides you with a wealth of interesting activities. These play an important role in your outstanding behaviour and in your exceptionally high levels of respect and tolerance towards others who may be different. You told us that you enjoy school and we saw this in your high levels of attendance – well done! The inspectors were pleased with the progress you make as you move through the school. Your school agrees that those of you who are fast learners could do better in developing your writing skills and in mathematics. Your teachers have put in place the necessary actions to make sure that this happens and the signs of improvement are already clear to see.

The teaching you receive is good and some is outstanding. In order to make sure that more teaching is outstanding so that you all achieve as well as you possibly can, the inspectors are asking for the following things to happen:

- Make sure that the tasks you are set are always challenging enough.
- Ensure that all teaching is lively and varied enough to keep all of you fully involved in lessons.
- Make sure that marking is consistent in quality and your progress is checked rigorously so that you all know what you need to do to improve your work and the steps you need to take to reach your challenging targets.

The inspectors are confident that you will continue to work hard and make sure your school continues to improve.

We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely
Stephen Wall
Lead inspector

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