



Garstang St Thomas' Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119528
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280582
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Michael McIlroy HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Kepple Lane Garstang Preston, Lancashire
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	01995 603454
Age range of pupils	4 to 11	Fax number	01995 603455
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr Alan Pearson
Number on roll	169	Headteacher	Mrs Helen Ife
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves an advantaged community in Garstang. The great majority of pupils are White British. A few are of minority ethnic origin. Few have English as an additional language and very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Fifteen per cent of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities which is below average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is well above average. The school enjoys very close links with the local church. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils and has some outstanding features. It provides good value for money and serves the local community very well.

Pupils achieve well at the school. They receive a good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress there, particularly in the area of language development. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and achieve high standards in reading and mathematics. There are some weaknesses in writing which the school has begun to tackle. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to achieve well. The standards attained by pupils overall have been well above average for a number of years, particularly in mathematics and science. Less able pupils make very good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well due to the good support and care they receive.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community. Attendance is good but punctuality is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The good curriculum provides effective opportunities for both more able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make progress. The care, support and guidance which pupils receive are good. The school's Christian and inclusive ethos permeates school life and ensures that a high emphasis is placed on meeting the needs of all pupils, especially those with learning difficulties. Pupils receive good academic guidance overall, but there is scope to improve day to day assessment.

Leadership and management are good. The new headteacher provides strong leadership and has a clear vision for the school. Middle management is good. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is underdeveloped. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Governance is good. Parents are highly supportive of the school and especially praise its commitment to inclusion and its work with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stage 1, particularly for the more able.
- Make the monitoring of teaching and learning more rigorous.
- Improve day to day assessment.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards are above average and the achievement of pupils is good. This matches the view of the school. Most children enter the school with levels of skills and knowledge that are above average. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage, due to good teaching and the carefully planned experiences they receive. Particularly good progress is made in the area of language development. This good start is built upon in Key Stage 1, where pupils continue to make good progress. Overall standards achieved by pupils in the last four years have been well above average, although results

for more able pupils in writing have declined. The school has identified this as an area for improvement. The most recent national assessments indicate that standards remain above average, except in writing at the higher level.

Standards are high in Key Stage 2. In 2005, results in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science were well above average. Over three quarters of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in science. The progress pupils make in their learning is good. In 2005, pupils made particularly strong progress in mathematics and in science. Pupils did not do quite as well in English.

Initial results from the latest end of Key Stage 2 national assessments indicate that standards have been maintained, although results at Level 5 in science have declined.

Less able pupils make very good progress and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well due to the support and care they receive. The few pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school judges the personal development and well-being of pupils as outstanding. Inspectors found it to be good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spirituality is developed well through school assemblies, where pupils are reflective and thoughtful. Moral development is well promoted through the school rules. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures due to lessons about different countries and visits by speakers from abroad.

Pupils display good attitudes towards their work and enjoy school. Attendance is good, but punctuality is only satisfactory. The school recognises this. Behaviour is generally good, but occasionally a small group of pupils misbehave in lessons. Most pupils play safely and sensibly in the playground. They display very caring attitudes towards each other. Pupils are clear about whom to talk to in the event of any bullying. The contribution pupils make to the community is outstanding. They improved the local environment through involvement in the 'Britain in bloom' project. Some designed a float for the Whit Festival. Others designed a logo for the 'walking bus'. The school council has a very positive impact on the school. Councillors speak with pride of the additional opportunities it offers them. Recently, the council raised funds to purchase football nets to promote healthy lifestyles in school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that teaching and learning are good overall. The best teaching observed was characterised by good subject knowledge, high expectations and a brisk pace. Good use of challenging questions enabled pupils to develop their reasoning and speaking skills. Good planning ensured assessment

information was used to match work well to pupils' abilities. Learners understood clearly what to do. Teachers linked areas of the curriculum well, enabling pupils to transfer their learning across subjects. For example, in one good lesson in the Foundation Stage, role play and art work linked directly to the story pupils had been reading. Frequent repetition of new vocabulary helped younger children make good progress. The very good teaching of phonics in the Reception class enabled the youngest children to make above average progress. Where teaching was only satisfactory, weaknesses in the management of some pupils' behaviour slowed the rate of learning.

Pupils are confident learners due to the good relationships that exist with teachers and the support they receive. Opportunities for pupils to discuss work together when investigating problems provides them with additional support and further enhances confidence. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. They are well supported by skilled teaching assistants and good quality individual education plans (IEPs). The few pupils with English as an additional language benefit from additional specialist support which enables them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school judges the curriculum to be good. Inspectors agree. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs of learners. There is a suitable emphasis on English, mathematics and science. Learning is enhanced by extra classes for those who have fallen behind with their work. There is a wide range of extra curricular activities, including football, rounders and a choir. Drama and science clubs help promote learning. Some opportunities exist for pupils to learn modern foreign languages. Older pupils have the chance to learn musical instruments, such as the guitar.

The curriculum is enriched through visits to historical buildings and by a range of visitors, including African mango farmers. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included in all curriculum activities. Provision is made for more able pupils through problem solving activities organised by a local company, and the 'possums' programme hosted by the nearby secondary school. An appropriate level of homework is set which reinforces work taught in class. Pupils have good opportunities to exercise responsibility, for example, as team captains and monitors. Opportunities exist for all to participate in musical productions. A strong feature of the curriculum is the themed weeks, such as Fair Trade Week, the science week and the performing arts week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school and the inspectors judge the care, guidance and support for pupils to be good. All staff show a high level of care towards pupils. Child protection procedures are in place and reviewed regularly. Safe practices regarding recruitment of staff and educational visits ensure pupils' safety. Pupils are well supervised in school and satisfactorily supervised at playtimes.

Older pupils receive appropriate advice about growing up. Pupils receive guidance on staying safe and are taught about the dangers of hazardous substances. The school actively promotes healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Effective induction procedures exist for new pupils. Good links with local secondary schools ensure older pupils enjoy a smooth transfer to the next stage of their education.

The support and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a strength of the school. All have well written IEPs, know their targets and are involved in their review. Gifted and able pupils also have IEPs which set challenging targets. Looked after pupils are also well supported. Academic guidance for pupils is good overall. Day to day assessment strategies are used well in English but are less developed in other subjects. There are some inconsistencies in marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. This matches the school's judgement.

The new headteacher has provided strong leadership and has a clear vision for the school's future development. She is highly committed to the school's inclusive ethos, which ensures that all pupils are supported in their learning. She is industrious in seeking ways to develop this positive climate for learning. Following recent staffing changes, she has built a good team of effective teachers. New systems to monitor the school's work have been introduced but the monitoring of teaching and learning is insufficiently rigorous. Pupils have been consulted about their views of the school. The school's evaluation of its effectiveness is broadly accurate. Performance data is analysed and used to identify areas for improvement, such as writing. Issues identified for improvement at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. Last year the school met its challenging targets.

The Foundation Stage manager leads and manages her department well, as does the coordinator for special educational needs. Core subject managers have a clear view of their subjects' strengths and weaknesses. They monitor the work of pupils in their subject and have had opportunities to work alongside colleagues, but not all monitor teaching and learning.

Governance is good. Finances are carefully monitored and governors fully support the school's inclusive approach. They are supportive and challenging of the headteacher. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. They hold its ethos and its work with pupils with learning difficulties in high regard.

The school offers good value for money. It is well placed to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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To the pupils of:

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7 July 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so polite and helpful when we inspected your school recently. I am writing to tell you what we found. Some of the best things about your school which we saw were:

your contribution to the community is outstanding

you are well taught by your teachers

your behaviour is usually good

you are caring and kind to each other

your school looks after every one of you well

You have a very effective school council.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to make a few changes to make things even better for you at school. These are:

to improve writing in the school

to make more regular visits to classes to check up on how well you are learning

to find more ways of showing you how to improve your work.

Once again, thank you for all your help during our visit.

Yours sincerely

Michael McIlroy

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools