



Overton St Helen's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119539
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280586
Inspection dates 28 March 2006 to 29 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Dave Byrne

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lancaster Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Overton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Morecambe, Lancashire LA3 3EZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01524 858615
Number on roll	180	Fax number	01524 858615
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev David Newton
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Sammy Clarke

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school in a rural location. Children's attainment when they start school is above average. A below average percentage of children are eligible for free school meals and the proportion with learning and behavioural difficulties is low. Virtually all children are of white British origin with none requiring support for English as an additional language. There have been many unavoidable staff changes in the last 18 months and the headteacher has been in post for two terms.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. A strong Christian ethos contributes to children behaving well, forming good relationships and enjoying learning. Sound teaching results in children making satisfactory progress. The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children achieve standards expected for their ages. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 standards are above average in English and mathematics and average in science and information and communication technology (ICT). More able children, however, could do better and their achievement is inadequate. A satisfactory curriculum is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular clubs. Links between subjects are not exploited enough to inspire learning or to enable children to think and act on their own. The school is caring, safe and secure and children develop a sound knowledge and understanding of how to live healthily and keep safe. Recent initiatives show that children's views are valued, but they are not involved enough in the assessment of their work. Moral and social development is good, but children have a weak understanding of the diversity of cultures in Britain. The vast majority of parents value the school and willingly get involved in their children's education. Good leadership by the new headteacher has created a strong staff team. Together they are improving standards after a period of static growth caused by unavoidable staffing disruptions. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. It identifies many areas for improvement. These include improving assessment so that teachers can effectively monitor standards and learning in all subjects. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of the more able.
- Improve assessment to involve children more closely and to enable teachers to monitor learning effectively in all subjects.
- Improve the curriculum by making better links between subjects, creating more opportunities for children to think and act on their own and by making better provision for multi-cultural education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

While standards at the end of Year 6 are above average overall, achievement is only satisfactory given the above average attainment when children start school. Progress is satisfactory overall for the majority of children including those with learning and behavioural difficulties; however, the more able children do not make adequate progress. Every year since 2000, standards in Year 2 have been significantly above average with a particular strength in reading. In 2005, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Standards are rising in Key Stage 2 and, in 2006, children are well set to reach challenging targets for English and mathematics. This means that standards are now

above average overall in both of these subjects. In science and ICT, standards in Year 6 are average although children could do better in performing scientific investigations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development is satisfactory. Parents are justified in their view that their children enjoy school. The children's good behaviour and attitudes, their enjoyment for learning and their good attendance provide a secure foundation for their future economic well-being. During playtime, one child volunteered her opinion that, 'This is a great place to be. I feel safe and am never bullied'. This comment reflects the good levels of moral and social development and warm relationships amongst children and adults. The children's understanding of the rich diversity of cultures in Britain is, however, weak. Children have a satisfactory awareness of how to be healthy benefiting within school from such initiatives as the National Fruit Scheme. Children know about the importance of exercise and many participate willingly in sporting activities both in lessons and at after-school clubs. A shortage of outdoor equipment at break times, however, limits children from taking regular exercise throughout the day. The children's personal contribution to the school and wider community is satisfactory. They raise funds and plan events for charity. The school is in the early stages of giving children additional responsibilities through the school council. In other respects they do not have sufficient opportunities to take on duties to help in running aspects of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some instances of good teaching. Recent staff disruptions have contributed to some significant differences in the way that teachers work. The variations are most noticeable in the use of assessment, in the expectations for the more able and in the opportunities provided for children to think and act on their own. While children enjoy all lessons, they respond particularly well to expectations for them to use practical skills. Such opportunities are however too few. Throughout the school teachers have sound subject knowledge and make good use of recently installed ICT resources to enhance learning in lessons. Lesson planning and organisation are satisfactory. Not enough time is given though for children to evaluate how well they have learnt and to set targets for future improvement. The needs of the less able children and those of children with average attainment are well catered for but more able children are often not challenged enough. Teaching assistants make a vital contribution to children's learning. This is particularly so in the Foundation Stage and in supporting children with learning and behavioural difficulties across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements but it is not planned imaginatively. The school recognises this, and is in the process of establishing closer links between subjects to make work for the children more meaningful. The Foundation Stage curriculum has improved since the last inspection with the provision of a better range of practical activities. In Key Stages 1 and 2, a good emphasis is given to literacy, numeracy and ICT but not enough time is given to developing children's independent learning. The provision for children with learning and behavioural difficulties is satisfactory, but not enough attention is given to adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of the more able. A good range of well attended after-school activities extends the curriculum and a satisfactory range of educational visits and visitors enriches learning further. Personal, social and health education and citizenship are satisfactory. They contribute positively to children's personal development except in developing children's knowledge and understanding of our multicultural society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory overall with good quality levels of personal care and support. Parents are accurate in their views that the school is a safe and secure place. Procedures to promote child protection, safety and healthy lifestyles are effectively managed. Skilled teaching assistants and teachers give effective support to children with learning and behavioural difficulties. The quality of support for the more able however is not well organised and holds back the achievement of these children. Assessment is effective in English and mathematics but in other subjects it is weak. The involvement of children in assessing their own progress towards agreed targets for improvement is developing well but is not yet embedded across the school. This reduces progress. Communication with parents is good and encourages support at home. Effective links with other schools ease children's transition to the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The vision and commitment of the headteacher have restored the school's educational direction after a time of considerable disruption. Morale among staff is good and some effective strategies are being implemented successfully to raise achievement, particularly in Key Stage 2. The instability in staffing has affected the quality of monitoring of standards and learning. It is effective in English, mathematics, science and ICT, but inadequate in other subjects. The management of the Foundation Stage, and for children with learning and behavioural difficulties, is satisfactory but for the more able it is weak. Accommodation and resources are wisely used and the headteacher is successfully harnessing the qualities and skills of the staff. The governing body is very supportive and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. It makes sure that school self-evaluation is

accurate and that a clear agenda for improvement is established. Staffing disruptions have held back the rate of improvement since the last inspection and it has only been satisfactory. The renewed vigour and direction of staff and governors are improving the school and there is a good capacity for further improvement in future.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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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Mrs Sammy Clarke

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30 March 2006

Dear Children

You certainly enjoy your education and seem to thrive on the caring atmosphere provided for you. Your behaviour is good and you treat others with care and respect. We feel though, that it is important that you develop a better understanding of Britain's multicultural society.

You do well in mathematics and English, especially in reading, but there is some room for improvement in science. Your lessons are thoughtfully planned but, at times, work is not hard enough for some of you and we have asked the school to make sure that it is in future. We have also asked the school to help you understand more clearly how well you are doing so that you know how you can improve. In lessons, you work hard and it is good to see that you willingly help others. We noticed that when you are given practical work, most of you really enjoyed it. Our view is that more opportunities for practical work would help you to learn better. It is good to see that you happily use computers.

The headteacher knows you all well. In two terms, she has made many changes that are improving the school. Your contribution to the school is immeasurable. Those in the school council will know how good it feels to get involved in running the school. We hope that this continues in future and more of you get involved in helping out.

We wish you good luck for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy learning.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne and Sheila Mawer

(Your school inspectors)