



Grimsargh St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119565
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280594
Inspection dates 15 March 2006 to 15 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Hoban HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Preston Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Grimsargh
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Preston, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 653600
Number on roll	193	Fax number	01772 798 261
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Geoffrey Loxham
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Janet Butterworth

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was conducted by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI), who met with the headteacher, staff, parents, pupils and governors, visited sections of lessons and scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school. The inspection also took account of national and school data to compare the progress of the pupils of Grimsargh St Michael's with the progress made by pupils in similar schools.

Description of the school

Grimsargh St Michael's is a smaller than average Church of England primary school situated outside Preston, serving the local village and neighbouring urban wards. The school is graded as average on the school deprivation indicator, pupils come from a mix of socio-economic backgrounds, and are drawn predominantly from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average. Attainment on entry is reported as broadly average. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals is significantly below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Grimsargh St Michael's provides excellent education and support for its pupils. Pupils' attainment on entry is average: when they leave, their achievement and attainment are above average. The school adds value to their education; it is a school in which the families of Grimsargh and beyond can take great pride. The headteacher offers a vision of continuous improvement for the school. St Michael's is a self-critical unit, ready to build on strengths (such as in literacy and numeracy) in order to move forward in other areas, including raising further the standards in science, and developing better creative writing. From entry into the nursery unit, the pupils are taught and supported in an environment aimed at achievement – there is challenge, interest and care. Pupils and parents speak and write of the well-run school, its accent on challenge and stretching pupils, and a culture that values the contribution of each child. This is evidenced in the reflective nature of the school and its Christian concern that all may achieve and develop to the best of their abilities. Teaching is good, the curriculum is broad and stimulating, and pupils' involvement with outside groups is supportive of learning and of building skills for the future.

The school's self evaluation cycle is rigorous and assured. To move forward, the accent on pupils obtaining transferable skills should be strengthened to equip pupils for their future educational development. The consistency of marking should also be a focus, to bring it all to the highest level observed.

The school provides good value for money; and there is no doubt that it has the capacity to improve further. It has moved on its last inspection – areas for improvement have all been addressed; achievement has improved. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, inspires staff and pupils, and is continually working to improve education and care outcomes for the schoolchildren of Grimsargh St Michael's.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils reach higher than average standards of attainment in this school, and their progress is, overall, good. Pupils' attainment on entry is average; by the end of the reception year, attainment is higher than average for both boys and girls.

Standards at Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics were higher than the national averages in 2004 and 2005, and test results show they are improving year on year. With attainment on entry average, pupils' progress to the end of Key Stage 1 is better than average. Pupils reach these levels because of the high quality of teaching, challenge and pupils' evident commitment to learning.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics, science and English are also above average, exceptionally so for English. The progress pupils make between Key Stages 1 and 2 is well above average. Achievement for all pupil groups at the end of Key Stage 2 is average or better, including pupils with statements of special educational need.

The school monitors pupils' academic progress carefully, and adjusts teaching styles to reflect the needs of the individual child. The school sets challenging but realistic targets that are known both to pupils, and to their parents. Pupils understand what they need to do to improve, and rise to the challenges set by staff. Pupils with learning difficulties also make good progress; pupils and parents seen by the inspector praised the commitment of the school to those learners. Pupils enter with average attainment, and leave with achievement and standards both above average. Taken overall, performance is outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is a popular school, with the school's aims underpinned by an emphasis on Christian values – through prayer displays, pupils' thoughtful attitudes to one another, and a broader focus in school assemblies on Christianity and other faiths. There is a wealth of extra-curricular activity supported by the community, pupils engage well with outside bodies, and there is an accent on physical education (PE) – affecting, beneficially, pupils' health and teamwork skills – with a high degree of uptake. There is constructive engagement with parents and pupils. The school's leadership analysed returns from parental and pupils' questionnaires to establish strengths and weaknesses through parents' and pupils' eyes, and then acted. For example, better communications have been developed with parents, through evening courses on the curriculum generally, and on information and communication technology (ICT). With pupils, concerns about bullying were purposefully addressed, with the installation of a 'Worry Box', and, following the suggestion of the active, lively and articulate School Council, 'playground buddies'. Pupils now state that if there is bullying, it is acted on immediately and effectively. Behaviour observed was exemplary, and attendance is excellent.

Healthy eating is combined with exercise and outside school provision. There is evidence of exposure to other cultures through guided reading and assemblies, and the race equality policy is appropriate. Pupils learn of those less fortunate through a range of charity work, including raising funds for Christian Aid.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The good standards reached by pupils support this, and lessons observed maintained pupils' interest, demonstrated pace, and teachers' confidence in the subject area. Pupils were keen to learn, and responded vigorously to questioning that aimed to instil and develop subject knowledge. Monitoring supports teachers' development, and enables good practice to be shared. As a consequence of the use of assessment for learning, pupils know their targets and that they can access help to improve further. Pupils commented that they felt stretched by the teaching: one said 'the teachers and helpers push us to the best of our ability'. Tracking of pupils'

progress (including in Individual Education Plans) shows which children need support, and this is provided through a range of strategies, including working in mixed ability groups. Marking in books was variable: the best was constructive and sharp, and supported progress by setting questions to promote pupils' further understanding of the topic.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and well-balanced, with an increasing emphasis on the use of ICT to support other subjects. This practice promotes increased pupil interest in lessons and homework, and enables more effective use of time in class. Pupils expressed their enjoyment of learning, and commented that they liked ICT and mathematics, because they believe they can improve in readily identifiable steps. A very successful Book Week stimulated boys' interest in reading, and all pupils are involved in silent reading sessions during registration to further develop literacy, and improve creative writing, a gap noted by the school's subject audits. The school is also focusing on developing transferable skills in science and ICT, such as managing data and problem solving, to support pupils academically and socially. Pupils were particularly keen on PE and outdoor activities (including after school clubs) because of the positive impact on their health and their enjoyment of teamwork. The curriculum takes proper account of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties, and its effectiveness in involving those pupils was appreciated by parents, governors and the pupils themselves. The pupils considered that the curriculum and specific learning goals had enabled them to make good progress in their learning and enjoyment of school. Pupils are involved in a wide range of enrichment activities, which support the curriculum, and build independence, enjoyment and self-esteem. This includes charitable work, competitive sports, and a residential course in the Lake District for Years 5 and 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils' and parents' views are carefully analysed, and those views are very positive. A strength of the school is its work to support vulnerable pupils, and quickly integrate pupils who have joined the school. Pupils feel safe, and know that there is an adult they can approach if they have worries. There are effective tracking procedures in place. Worries about bullying have been effectively addressed. Better links are now developing with the main receiving secondary school; parents of former pupils commented that their children have adapted well to life in that new environment, as a consequence of the quality of learning, care and support received at St Michael's.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the school are strong and effective. The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She has brought a school causing concern in 1998

to a point where it is 'the best school in the district' according to one parent. The school's emphasis on continual improvement, on how things can be done better, have led to improvements in standards, exemplary behaviour, and high staff morale. The headteacher has appraised rigorously the school's strengths and areas requiring further work, and is determined to improve St Michael's still further. This preparedness to be self-critical is shared by the staff and governors. Subject co-ordinators know keenly their areas' strengths, and what needs to improve; they see the secure performance management system as an opportunity to test, with the headteacher, further improvements, as well as a welcome chance for the headteacher to assess their progress.

- The contributions of the headteacher and deputy are valued by parents, pupils and governors and their skills are called upon to help other schools to improve, and learn from the gains made by St Michael's. All teaching staff are involved in the shaping of the school development plan, and the self evaluation form is an accurate portrayal of the school's strengths, and what it needs to do to move on further. The self evaluation emphasis on inclusion resonates through the whole school, from pupils to the governing body, and HMI saw examples of how well pupils value each other's contributions. The governing body husbands resources effectively, knows the school's strengths, and is clear about its role as a critical friend to the leadership team.

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	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?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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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Mrs Janet Butterworth

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16 March 2006

Dear Children

As you know, I visited your school this month to talk to you and your teachers about how well you were doing. I was very grateful to those of you who missed breaks or lessons in order to talk with me.

I found that you are continuing to get good marks at SATs, and that you all try and take care of one another. You made clear to me just how much you enjoyed school. You knew what your targets were, and how to get even better! Your teachers and helpers really stretch you, and although sometimes you find this a bit difficult, one of you said that 'we always have a go and try to do our best'.

I found your school a very welcoming place. You are well looked after and cared for, and the staff I spoke to enjoy teaching you and your behaviour in lessons and outside was excellent. I met many of you, and read some of your work and the views of your parents.

I think your school is a very good school – I would say it is outstanding. But you know that schools, like pupils, always need to try harder, and there are one or two things that I have asked Mrs Butterworth and your staff to think about. One is marking. I want all the marking to be excellent, so you receive better guidance in what to do next. Secondly, I want you to obtain more skills, such as in ICT that you can use in other areas of work.

I do hope all goes well for you, your teachers and your parents in the future. I did enjoy coming to your school.

Best wishes

Mike Hoban HMI