



Hoole St Michael Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119570
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280596
Inspection dates 28 February 2006 to 1 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Eric Jackson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Liverpool Old Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Much Hoole
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Preston, Lancashire PR4 5JQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 613219
Number on roll	109	Fax number	01772 613219
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev. Steven Hughes
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Melling

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	28 February 2006 - 1 March 2006	280596

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Hoole St Michael's is a smaller than average primary school. It has close links with its parish church, and serves a socio-economically advantaged area. Children's attainment at entry to reception covers a wide range, but is generally above average. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There are small numbers of children from minority ethnic groups, and none learn English as an additional language. A smaller than average proportion of children leave or join during the school year. There is after-school provision run by the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection confirms the school's own view: provision is satisfactory with some good features, giving satisfactory value for money. Parents and children are very supportive of the school, saying, "It is like a big happy family." The children's personal development is good, as are care and safety procedures. The school works well with parents and outside agencies to ensure children's well-being. However, children do not learn enough about cultural diversity. Provision in the Foundation Stage, and the progress children make, are satisfactory. They attain above nationally expected standards by the end of reception. By the end of Year 2, children attain standards at least above the national average, and sometimes well above. Standards by the end of Year 6 were very low in the 2005 national tests and average in 2004. Previously, overall standards have been above or well above the national average. Significant staff disruption was a major influence on the recent poor results. Also, work was not matched accurately to the needs of more able pupils. Changes instituted by the new headteacher in assessment procedures, self-evaluation and teaching and learning have had good impact on pupils' rate of progress in Years 3 to 6. The current Year 6 are on track to achieve the challenging targets set for them in national tests, in line with the school's previous good performance. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good features, particularly in Years 3 to 6. However, many pupils do not know enough about how they might improve because work is not always marked to a high enough standard. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good enrichment. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership. Since her appointment in 2005, she has set very clear goals to bring about improvement, with new and effective self-evaluation procedures involving all staff and governors. The school's capacity to improve is good.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards by the end of Year 6 by ensuring that all children do as well as they can, particularly more able children.
- Ensure that teachers' marking of pupils' work helps them to understand more clearly what they need to do to improve.
- Improve children's personal development through greater understanding of the cultural diversity of Britain and the wider world.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Overall standards are above average. No group of children currently underachieves. Most reception children make satisfactory progress towards the nationally recommended learning goals, building satisfactorily on their above average attainment on entry. Children in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress, maintaining overall above average levels of attainment. In the 2005 national

tests, over half of the children achieved higher than nationally expected levels in reading and science, which is well above the national average. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach the challenging targets set for them in this year's national tests. They are currently working at above average levels of attainment in response to determined, focused teaching. For example, their writing journals show perceptive and above average critical analysis of text. Also, they plan scientific investigations with a good understanding of scientific method for their age. This is a significant improvement on the low standards Year 6 reached in the national tests in 2005, particularly in mathematics and science, missing higher level targets by some margin. This is because more able pupils did not do as well as expected.

The 2005 year group had a disrupted final year, being taught by a succession of supply and temporary teachers. This impeded their progress as some children became disruptive, interfering with other children's learning. By appointing a skilled teacher in September 2005, the school took the necessary step to ensure that the current Year 6 achieve the levels more usually seen in the school. In Years 3 and 4, progress in lessons is usually satisfactory and sometimes good. It is often excellent in Years 5 and 6, matching the teacher's high expectations and by ensuring that work is matched accurately to pupils' varying needs. Throughout the school, the few children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Provision for children's personal development and well-being is good, confirming the school's view. This is a maintained strength, founded in very good relationships. The headteacher has reinvigorated links with the church, and the school's Christian mission is celebrated with reverence and enjoyment. Spiritual, moral and social developments are good. Cultural development has improved to be satisfactory. However, there is insufficient emphasis on teaching pupils about cultural diversity in order to help children fully understand their place in the world. Children behave well in lessons and around the school. Their conduct throughout the trip to a church service was exemplary. Children are actively involved and show good attitudes in lessons, eagerly discussing ideas with their 'talk partners'. Attendance is satisfactory. Children say that they enjoy their learning, feel safe and secure, and learn important lessons about healthy living. Inspection findings confirm their views. They make a good contribution to the school, church and local community. School councillors take their roles seriously. The school prepares children for the world of work well in helping them learn basic skills, how to make decisions and to cooperate with others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good features. Recent staff changes and new management roles have already had good impact on children's progress. Key to this is the headteacher's insistence on high expectations and standards. This has led to greater clarity in the assessment of learning and more focused staff accountability for achievement, particularly potential high attainers. For example, in an outstanding English lesson, Year 6 children used information and communication technology (ICT) skilfully in analysing the features of non-chronological writing. They also prepared thoughtful, well-written and delivered homilies for an Ash Wednesday church service. Teachers' planning for learning is satisfactory, and often good in Years 3 to 6. Children learn how they can be active in their own improvement, especially in Years 5 and 6. However, this good quality of marking is not consistent across the school. This means that not all pupils know how they can improve their work. There is a good focus on keeping boys engaged, supported by new resources to interest them in learning. Well-targeted professional development for teaching and support staff has led to improvements in children's learning, particularly in science and mathematics. Teachers' specialist skills in music, ICT and English are used effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, not quite as good as the school judges, but with a strong focus on English, mathematics, science and ICT. There are good enrichment activities through a wide variety of clubs, visitors to the school, and trips out, including a residential experience for older children. Reception children now have a safe outdoor play area, where children enjoyed action painting in the style of Jackson-Pollock. Both the reception and Year 5/6 class areas have recently been upgraded, which helps with the delivery of the full curriculum effectively. A key member of staff with specific expertise is helping other staff to develop their ICT and science skills. The sharing of subject expertise amongst the staff is also a good feature in English, music and art and design.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents and children say that the school is a safe and happy place. Inspection findings confirm their views and that of the school. Child protection procedures are secure, and all statutory health and safety requirements are in place. One child said, 'If you have a problem, there is always someone to help you.' Older children take responsibility for younger children in the playground, and the staff are vigilant in dealing with the rare cases of bullying. Children have individual targets for learning, including children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The staff monitor these carefully, and there are improved procedures to check twice yearly that children make at least satisfactory progress. Parents are involved well in these procedures.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, and improving. Parents almost unanimously welcome the headteacher as an excellent appointment. One parent summarised their feelings: 'This has always been a happy school, but now there is a clearer focus on standards.' The headteacher leads well, setting clear direction and high expectations for all children's achievement. She has developed strong procedures to help staff meet challenging progress targets. A recent whole staff review confirmed the increased rate of progress in children's learning across the school, especially those in Years 3 to 6. The key improvement has been in reversing the decline in progress in Year 6, so that it is now good, and sometimes outstanding. Governors say that they have not been 'critical friends' in the past, but feel that they are now well-informed enough to hold the school to account for the quality of its provision. Governors regularly monitor what is happening during the working day. Other staff in key roles welcome their increased responsibility, and the effective training in the local authority's Primary Leadership Programme to equip them to fulfil it. New evaluation procedures, including of assessment data, have led the staff to be more open about the school's strengths and weaknesses, particularly in children's progress. The results of this thorough evaluation have been used to draw up a convincing improvement plan, covering all the points for improvement noted in the inspection. There is a vibrant sense of optimism in the school, and it is well placed to make rapid improvement, supported by good links with other local schools and the local authority.

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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?	2	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	2	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?	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?	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?	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	3	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	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 Katheryn Melling

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3 March 2006

Dear Children

First, let me thank you for your kind welcome to St Michael's. Though a stranger, your friendly 'Good morning, Mr Jackson' when you met me in the playground on Tuesday morning made me feel part of your school family, as I'm sure Mrs Melling had asked you to. It was also very moving to hear you sing so well in church, and thoughtfully talk about the meaning of Lent for you.

As you know, I came to see how well your school helps you to learn, and how well it looks after you. Your parents told me that the most important thing for them was that you are happy and safe. Your School Councillors confirmed that this was how your school is for you. You also behave well, try hard in lessons, and look after one another. You said that there is always a member of staff to help you if you need it, and I saw that. In fact, there are many important changes happening in your school to make things better for you.

It is important that your school helps you to achieve as well as you can in your learning. I think that the staff already help all of you to make at least steady progress, and some of you to make really good progress, particularly in reading. I have asked the staff to challenge you to reach the highest levels you can, especially in mathematics and science. It means that you need to know more about what you have to do to improve. This will work if you keep on trying to do your best. I have also asked the staff to teach you about the great variety of peoples and ways of living here and in the rest of the world. I am sure that you and your school will do this well.

With best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Eric Jackson (Lead Inspector)