



St John with St Michael Church of England Primary School, Shawforth

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119690
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280636
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 17 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jackie Barnes

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Moss Side Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Shawforth
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Rochdale, Lancashire OL12 8EP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 852614
Number on roll	135	Fax number	01706 852614
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Sharon Drummond
Date of previous inspection	1 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Beverly Holmes

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 16 May 2006 - 17 May 2006	Inspection number 280636
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small Pennine-valley school, situated north of Rochdale, mainly serves its immediate locality. When pupils start school, they vary widely in what they know and can do; overall their level of skills and development is slightly below average. The school also has a higher proportion than usual of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils have English as their first language. Entitlement to free school meals is about average and the community is reasonably stable.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which has the confidence of its parents and a successful record of improvement. Pupils enjoy school, and are confident, well behaved and supportive of each other. Many have an outstanding level of maturity, and their personal development is good. Pupils know how to keep healthy and safe, and have a well placed belief that the school will keep them safe and staff will support and care for them.

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Standards in English tend to be a little weaker than in mathematics and science. Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and most attain the expected goals for their age. Throughout the school, most pupils make at least satisfactory progress, although a few could do better. The most capable pupils regularly attain above nationally expected standards. Teaching and learning are good overall, but there is some variability throughout the school that occasionally slows pupils' progress. Successful recent initiatives in the analysis of assessment information have yet to be fully effective in planning pupils' learning.

- The school is well led and managed, with good support from the governing body, and a good record of improvement. Subject leaders are not yet making enough impact on their areas of responsibility. This has been accurately identified as an area for development by the school's good self-evaluation procedures. The school provides good value for money and has the capacity and commitment to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and for those pupils whose progress is currently too slow.
- Increase the amount of good teaching through more effective uses of assessment information when planning teaching and learning in lessons.
- Carry out the plans to increase the impact of the subject leaders on the quality of teaching and the progress made by all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average by the time pupils leave the school. The most capable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. A good start is made in the Foundation Stage, where pupils achieve well. This is mainly due to the quality of care and the wide range of learning experiences provided. By the time they are due to go into Year 1, most are close to reaching the goals for their age, with some pupils exceeding these.

- By Year 2, progress is satisfactory overall and standards broadly average. The most capable pupils attain particularly well in writing. The overall results in the 2005

national tests, for eleven year olds, were above average. In science, all pupils attained the expected level for their age with over half attaining the higher Level 5. In English, over a third of the pupils attained Level 5, which is more than most schools, but a below average proportion attained the nationally expected Level 4. The school's challenging targets for the higher levels were met in English and exceeded in mathematics. However, overall results fell short of the school's targets. This was partly because of the increase in the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but also because, for some pupils, the pace of progress slows as they move through the school. Occasionally, a few are not able to catch up in Year 6 and so they do not achieve as well as they could.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. The maturity and independence of many pupils throughout the school are outstanding. This provides a strong basis for their learning. Pupils' personal development is built on good relationships with staff, and a wide range of experiences and activities which effectively develop pupils' confidence, self-esteem and their caring approach to each other. They know how to make healthy and safe choices, and have confidence that adults will keep them safe in school and respond to their concerns. They make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, much of which is well supported by the school's faith community and the day-to-day example set by adults in the school. Pupils report that they enjoy school, particularly the practical and creative activities, and sport. Almost all attend regularly and the school responds quickly to any unnecessary absence. Their attitudes to school and their behaviour are generally good, although not all pupils are able to sustain their concentration for long periods. In some lessons, these pupils become restless and their motivation declines if they are inactive for too long. Pupils are aware of the needs of others in the local and wider community, and are articulate and very comfortable in expressing their views to adults. For example, one member of the school council, when explaining why the improvements in the playground included a 'time out' spot, commented, 'I know it looks a bit like super-nanny but some of us still need it'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are calm, teachers are clear about what to teach, literacy and numeracy have a suitably high priority, and staff encourage and support pupils well. Pupils also benefit from regular teaching by specialists in French, music, science and sport. Teachers carefully prepare the resources for teaching and learning, and this generally maintains a reasonable pace to lessons and keeps pupils' interest. On occasions, however, the introduction to lessons is too lengthy. This is partly because each class contains two year-groups, each with a wide range of

ability, and teachers take the time to be sure all pupils understand the teaching points. However, the result tends to be a loss of concentration and attention, especially by the lower attaining pupils. The school has recognised that some pupils learn best in small groups, and is increasingly using this strategy to reduce the number of pupils and the range of ability in lessons. This works well in maintaining pupils' motivation and the pace at which they work, and there is potential to extend this arrangement as teaching assistants further develop their skills.

The school has a good range of assessment information and data available. This is used effectively to track pupils' progress. Also, the rigorous analysis of test results has successfully identified common weaknesses, which have then led to improvements in teaching and learning. Although teachers know pupils well and support their learning in lessons, the use of assessment information to plan learning matched to their abilities and needs is not often evident. As a result, pupils occasionally have work which is too hard or too easy, so they do not make the progress they could. In the Foundation Stage, each pupil's learning is carefully planned and checked. Expectations of their progress are high in most areas of their learning and teaching is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum is good. It provides a wide range of activities and experiences, including literacy and numeracy, which successfully support the personal and academic development of pupils of all ages and abilities. This is particularly effective for the most able pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The provision for visitors and out-of-school visits is especially valuable to those pupils who have little experience beyond the local community. For pupils who need support in literacy and numeracy, additional group and individual provision enhances their progress, particularly in spelling and reading. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about living healthy and safe lifestyles, and developing relationships within the school community. They also have opportunities to perform before audiences and to play sport, which successfully contribute to the good level of confidence that most show. Provision for outdoor play is good. It makes carefully considered arrangements for both quiet and boisterous play, together with a range of imaginative equipment and older pupils who act effectively as play leaders to encourage cooperative play and friendship.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The staff take good care of pupils, and the school gives due attention to procedures for their protection and safety. The 'family feel' of the school is appreciated by parents and pupils, and is a strength of the school, which has a growing reputation for making sure pupils of all abilities are respected and included in all that is offered. Pupils with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support from a teaching assistant in lessons and in groups. Generally this support is good, but it can vary depending on the quality of the written planning for the lesson and the opportunity

to discuss their role with the teacher. A recent focus on making sure pupils are well informed about how to improve their work is going well. Targets give pupils guidance on what to achieve next, and improvements in the marking of books ensure that they know what they have done well. Most older pupils can now give a clear account of their own strengths and weaknesses. Parents are involved in making comments on homework. Although not all parents always manage to find the time to give this support, the process keeps them in touch with their child's progress, as do the twice-yearly meetings and annual reports.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school is well led by a capable headteacher working closely with the deputy headteacher. An outstanding feature is the analysis of the extensive data collected on pupils' progress and attainment which, together with other school documentation, is efficiently organised and accessible. This information is beginning to influence how pupils' learning is managed. Although at an early stage, there is clear potential for further flexible use of teaching strategies and staff to make sure all pupils progress equally well across the year groups. A number of national and local initiatives have been successfully undertaken and there is a clear commitment to school improvement from all those involved in the leadership of the school. This has resulted in a calm and welcoming atmosphere for learning, in which all pupils have a broad range of experiences for personal and academic development, and most achieve as well as they can. The school's self-evaluation is informed by a wide range of views on the school's effectiveness, including those of parents and pupils. It has accurately identified areas for improvement, including the impact of the subject leaders on standards and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Good examples of subject leadership already exist, notably in English, but not yet established in all subjects as recent priorities have been mainly about whole-school issues rather than subjects. The governing body is increasingly involved in the work of the school, particularly through the work of committees, and has taken difficult decisions where necessary to support its improvement.

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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	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?	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	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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St John with St Michael Church of

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16 May 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed meeting you all. You helped me to understand how much you enjoy school. I saw how confident you are, and how you care for each other. I was particularly impressed by your work with the school council, and the improvements to the school playground that you have helped to design. You are well behaved and polite, and you know how to keep safe and healthy. You respect your teachers and help to make the school work smoothly. I looked at your books and could see that most of you have improved your work, and some of you are doing very well in your tests, especially in science. The adults in school look after you well, and you help them to make your school a welcoming and happy place.

I think some of you can do even better, especially in English. I have asked your school to help you to do this by ensuring that you have work that is closely matched to what you need to learn in order to improve. I have also asked your headteacher and teachers to make sure all of you are making the progress you should. You could also help, by making sure that you listen carefully to what your teachers are saying, and by making good decisions about when it is the right time to be very quiet and when to talk.

Thank you for all your help and my best wishes to everyone.

Yours faithfully

J M Barnes

Lead inspector