



Mellor St Mary Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119424
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291413
Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Geoffrey Yates

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Brundhurst Fold
School category	Voluntary aided		Mellor, Blackburn
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire, BB2 7JL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 812581
Number on roll (school)	137	Fax number	01254 814746
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev Peter Hudson
		Headteacher	Mrs Christine Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006	Inspection number 291413
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. It serves an area where national and local data show a high degree of educational advantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is low. A below average number of pupils receive free school meals. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English. Overall attainment on entry to school is above average.

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 where children thrive and enjoy learning within a Christian environment. One Year 2 pupil proudly stated that 'Every day I love coming to school because I learn lots of new things.' The school is too modest in its self assessment that overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Children start school with above average skills. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress and this continues throughout Years 1 to 6. At the end of Year 6, children attain high standards in English, mathematics and science. In the 2006 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 almost all pupils attained the nationally expected levels and over two thirds of the age group attained above the expected levels. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching that is highly focused on moving pupils on. However, higher attaining pupils do not use their writing skills well in other subjects. Good relationships and high expectations of work and behaviour results in pupils trying hard and making good progress in lessons. Work is marked but opportunities are missed to provide pupils with information that will help them to improve. Parents think highly of the school. One parent commented, 'I feel assured that the needs of my children as individuals are catered for in every way.'

There is a good curriculum that strongly supports pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills, and their personal development. A particular strength of the curriculum is the provision for instrumental music tuition with around 60 percent of Key Stage 2 learning to play brass, woodwind, recorder or string instruments. Pupils' personal development is good, and there are good levels of pastoral care, so that pupils feel safe and secure. Behaviour is good and pupils have good relationships with staff and with each other, enjoying both work and play. Pupils are motivated and eager to learn. They have good opportunities to make choices, as well as receiving good, specific teaching from adults. The outcomes of the school's provision in relation to the Every Child Matters initiative are good. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and join in enthusiastically with physical activities in lessons, clubs and at playtimes. The high standards they achieve in basic skills in English, mathematics, science and in information and communication technology prepares them well for life after school. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads the school well and receives good support from her staff and from a knowledgeable governing body. Good leadership and management have ensured that pupils receive a good quality of education. There are good systems to keep track of standards and to address any issues that arise. The school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure higher attaining pupils have sufficient and challenging opportunities to use their writing skills in other subjects.
- Ensure that marking provides pupils with clear information linked to their targets on how they might improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Throughout the school pupils make good progress and demonstrate good achievement and above average standards overall. Standards in reading are high. When children start school, their knowledge and skills are above those expected for their age. They make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 most exceed the national expectations for children of that age. Good progress continues in Years 1 to 6 with above average standards at the end of both key stages. In previous years a small group of higher attainers have not made good progress in Years 3 to 6. However, the most recent test results and inspection evidence based on the school's assessment information of current progress shows that this is no longer the case. As such, progress is now good in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve well overall. In the 2006 Year 6 National Curriculum tests results were very high compared with the results gained by schools nationally both at the expected level and at the higher level in English, mathematics and science. A weakness in English is that higher attaining pupils do not use their writing skills well in other subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the good quality support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. As a result, attendance is above average and pupils show a tremendous pride in 'their' school. One very young pupil stated, 'It does not matter if you make a mistake because it is a part of learning.' The school is a harmonious community in which racial or bullying incidents are rare. Pupils behave responsibly and work well together in a purposeful atmosphere which parents value. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show respect and tolerance for each other and recognise and appreciate differences in cultures and faiths. Pupils would like to be consulted more about how the school might be improved further. Currently there is no formal forum for them to present their views. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through activities such as fund raising for charity. They develop very good basic skills and positive attitudes to work that will help them in the next stage of their education and in the world of work. Pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and staying active and this is encouraged through a range of school initiatives that have led to the school being awarded the Healthy School's award.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. A key strength is the way in which all members of staff provide many opportunities for pupils to use their good speaking and listening skills. The size of the school necessitates that pupils in some age groups are taught in mixed age group classes. The school's decision to employ extra members of staff to ensure that pupils are taught English and mathematics in separate age groups is highly successful. As a result, pupils of all attainment levels benefit and make good progress. Lessons are orderly and purposeful, because pupils respond positively to high expectations. They like their teachers, so they work hard. Teachers make lessons interesting by for example, allowing pupils time to compare the full edition copies of the works of Charles Dickens with abridged copies. Teachers make use of targets to motivate pupils. However, opportunities are missed to provide pointers for improvement. In the Reception class the teacher's lively approach ensures that children enjoy all aspects of their learning. All teachers make effective use of the skilled support assistants to help pupils learn, particularly those who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's good curriculum is well-planned, enabling pupils to benefit from a broad range of subjects and activities. Older pupils look forward to the weekly French lessons. There is a good range of out of school activities for older pupils but not for younger pupils. The school prides itself in ensuring that all pupils take part in school productions. Great care is taken in ensuring that sufficient emphasis is given to building basic skills in English and mathematics but not to the neglect of other subjects. However, not enough opportunities are provided for higher attaining pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects. Around 60% of the Key Stage 2 pupils learn to play orchestral instruments. Pupils say they benefit greatly from the school's involvement in music festivals and other concerts. A wide range of visits, visitors enrich the curriculum. Pupils learn to lead healthy lives and to adopt safe practices through a well planned personal, social and health education programme. The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage has been improved but the good quality of the inside area is not matched by the outside provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, support and guidance. Child protection and pupil safeguarding procedures are in place and staff have received appropriate training. Health and safety procedures are good and regular checks help to ensure pupils are safe. Good relationships mean that pupils are confident in seeking help or reassurance

from the adults in school when necessary. Teachers have instilled in pupils the principles of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils say that the school has helped them to trust other people and that they know it is a safe place for them to grow and learn. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are supported well. Good links with the receiving secondary schools aid pupils' preparation for the move to the next stage of their education. Pupils' progress is monitored very effectively and there are good assessment systems in place. As a result, pupils are set targets but marking is not used well to reinforce what needs to be done.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. As a result of the effective leadership of the headteacher, there is a strong sense of shared purpose and a clear vision for future developments. The headteacher receives good support from her deputy headteacher. The school effectively meets pupils' needs within an inclusive environment where everyone is valued for what they are and not for what they might be. Previous inspection issues have been dealt with well. Out of necessity in this small school subject leaders have many responsibilities but carry out their duties well. Assessment data are analysed effectively and used to set challenging targets for the school. Consequently, weaknesses in pupils' performance are quickly spotted and effective action taken. For example, the school had concerns about the lack of a uniform way of teaching pupils how to carry out numerical calculations. The school now has a clear policy in place. Planning for improvement is good. Priorities arise out of careful analysis of school information and the views of all stakeholders. The school seeks the views of pupils and their parents regularly and acts upon them when appropriate. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and appreciate what it does for their children. Governors keep themselves well informed and discharge their responsibilities well.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Mellor St Mary Church of England Primary School

Brundhurst Fold

Mellor

Blackburn

Lancashire

BB2 7JL

24 November 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for helping me during the inspection. I would like to tell you about my findings. You will not be surprised to know that I think your school is a good school. I enjoyed watching you learn and talking to you. It was a pleasure to hear the school's orchestra and to hear you sing. The amount of money you raised recently for charity was a tremendous achievement. The list below shows some of the many things I liked about your school.

- You work hard and behave very well.
- You are keen to offer your opinions and also to listen to the views of others.
- You like your teachers and other members of staff and the way they make learning interesting.
- All the adults in school work very hard to care for you.
- You enjoy the visits you make to different places and the many clubs after school.

We have asked your teachers to look at a two things to make your work even better.

- To provide you with more challenging opportunities to use your writing skills in subjects such as history and geography.
- To make sure that when they mark your work, where appropriate, they make written comments that help you to do even better.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates

Lead Inspector