



Medlar-with-Wesham Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119553
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291458
Inspection dates 28–29 September 2006
Reporting inspector Eric Jackson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Garstang Road North
School category	Voluntary aided		Wesham, Preston
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire, PR4 3DE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 682836
Number on roll (school)	187	Fax number	01772 671972
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Marjorie Towers
		Headteacher	Mr Bill Hulme
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Almost all the pupils are White British, with a small number of new entrants from Eastern Europe who are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The number of pupils taking free school meals is below average, although socio-economic circumstances locally are average. Children's attainment at entry is in line with that expected nationally for children this age. There is an above average number of boys compared to girls. The school provides after-school care and a breakfast club jointly with another school.

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 with some key strengths. This judgement is lower than the school's own view of its provision. Parents support the school enthusiastically, saying, 'It is like a strong, caring family'. The quality of pupils' personal development and well-being continues to be good. Pupils behave well, sometimes excellently, and approach their work and play with real enthusiasm in response to the staff's good care and high expectations of their attitude to learning. The staff's sensitive interpretation of the school's Christian mission also provides good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for pupils, improved through links with a multicultural school in Preston.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Provision is satisfactory in Reception and standards are in line with those expected nationally. New children settle well because the staff support them very effectively. Standards have risen in recent years in Years 1 and 2, and pupils reached above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2005. By the end of Year 6, standards have been broadly average over the last few years. Pupils achieved best in science and made least progress in English. This is reflected in a fall in standards in English in the 2006 national tests, which were well below the school's targets. Currently in lessons, the progress pupils make in English in Years 3 to 6 is at least satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features, an improvement since the last inspection. Recent staff development focused on involving pupils more in knowing what they need to do to make progress. This is beginning to have some positive effect. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, and the headteacher's calm approach is reflected in the school's welcoming atmosphere. Staff and governors work effectively to promote pupils' safety and well-being. There are weaknesses in the school's use of assessment information, and in some aspects of its satisfactory self-evaluation, which slow down the rate at which some pupils make progress, especially in English. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in English by the end of Year 6 through a more prompt and effective focus on those pupils needing extra help.
- Simplify the assessment of pupils' learning and progress so that clear information is available to plan new learning and raise standards.
- Ensure that senior staff and governors check that all pupils' progress is at least satisfactory and hold staff to account when it is not.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory and sometimes good in Reception, good in Years 1 and 2,

and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. A new teacher has quickly established herself in Reception, enabling the fresh intake to become settled and make effective progress after only three weeks. Pupils have done well in tests at the end of Year 2 recently. Reading is a particular strength, taught well in school, and supported well at home by parents.

Standards in science by the end of Year 6 have fallen from well above average to above average by the end of Year 6 in the last three years, although achievement has remained at least satisfactory. Standards in mathematics and English have varied. Attainment in mathematics and English has been broadly average, but pupils underachieved in English in the last two years. The current Year 6 is working at higher levels than this, however, exemplified by writing from some pupils about Queen Victoria's accession that would not look out of place for Year 9 pupils. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily. A small number of recently admitted pupils learning English as an additional language are making rapid progress in learning English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school are a credit to them, their parents and the school. Their good attendance underlines this view. They understand and follow the school's expectations, generally work hard, and help each other in a friendly manner. Older pupils readily care for younger pupils as reading partners, playground buddies, or class helpers at lunchtime. All pupils learn to be safe and healthy, and to look after one another, including as members of the effective school council. Any squabbles are soon sorted out, and bullying is rare. Pupils join in spiritual occasions with reverence and enjoyment, qualities they bring to most of their work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is nurtured well by the school and is good. Through the curriculum, visits, charitable giving and good links with other schools, they grow in cultural maturity and understanding of their role in society. Their preparation for further development of their life skills is generally good, although it is satisfactory in some key aspects of their academic learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are good. This is why standards and achievement by the end of Year 2 have improved in recent years. Across the school, the staff have good working relationships with the pupils that allow their learning in lessons to progress without unnecessary interruptions. For example, Year 1 developed good listening skills during an exciting game in music because they responded well to the activity and followed the teacher's guidance on how to behave. Good work was also observed in information and communication technology (ICT). Sometimes, what the staff know about pupils'

learning from observations and tests is recorded in different ways. This is confusing so that some pupils who need help do not receive it, or falling trends in achievement across groups of pupils are missed. The staff are developing new assessment procedures alongside other systems at the moment. This has the potential to confuse even more unless decisions are taken soon about:

- what assessments are needed
- what records should be kept
- how the information gained is to be used in planning new learning, and informing parents.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It concentrates on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and has an improving focus on ICT. It meets statutory requirements. There are some good additional elements through musical tuition, concerts, visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. A Year 6 residential visit at the beginning of the year extends pupils' learning and personal development well. Whilst the school has responded to major national strategies for English, mathematics and assessment, there has been little innovation from within the school. For example, little has been done in response to national prompting to make the primary curriculum and pupils' learning more effective through increasing pupils' enjoyment of their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This aspect is satisfactory overall, but care is good. Statutory requirements to safeguard pupils are in place. Pupils are safe and well looked after. Parents and pupils all affirm this. Support and guidance are satisfactory but variable. Vulnerable pupils are well cared for and given good support by the staff. Support for some pupils with learning difficulties withdrawn from class is good and sometimes excellent. Two girls made outstanding progress in learning mathematical techniques because the helpful strategies were taught through simple but effective games. At other times, support is sometimes satisfactory but uninspiring.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

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Leadership and management are satisfactory, as at the last inspection. The headteacher sets the tone of the school well, and is thoroughly respected by parents, staff and pupils. He ensures that the school runs smoothly, that pupils' personal development is good, and that the staff generally perform their duties effectively. Good links have been made with

parents, the parish, the community and other local schools and colleges to the benefit of the pupils' learning. The whole staff work hard, and ensure that statutory requirements are fulfilled, supported effectively by governors. Improvement following the last inspection has been satisfactory. The staff gather a great deal of information about the outcomes of their work, particularly about pupils' progress and attainment. However, they do not interpret all of this data accurately enough to identify what it might reveal. This has led to a lack of urgency in tackling some weaknesses in pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6. This has further led to some pupils achieving lower levels in national tests than expected, especially in English.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Medlar-with-Wesham Church of England Primary

Garstang Road North

Wesham

Preston

Lancashire

PR4 3DE

2 October 2006

Dear Children

As promised, this is your version of the inspection report for your school.

First of all, Mr Massey and I want to thank you for your friendly and helpful welcome during our visit. We had read in the last report about your school in 2001 that children here were well behaved and tried hard to learn. If that report included some of your older brothers or sisters, you can tell them that you have kept up the school's proud tradition.

We feel that your school provides a sound education for you, and that it cares for you well. With your parents, the staff help you to grow into kind, helpful, hard-working young people. The way you look after one another is good, and you behave well. Many of you reach good levels in your work, and almost all of you try your best in lessons. Year 6 told me that the children in the school welcome new children and make sure that they have someone to play with. We believe that. We know that your playground is small, but we felt that you are very sensible in the way you use it.

We have asked the staff to look carefully at all the information they have about your work, and decide how they want to use it more effectively to help you improve further. This could be particularly useful for some children who need more help to improve their writing, and general English work. You could help the staff in this by thinking what it is you need to do to improve, and what your new learning targets should be, then trying to reach them.

Finally, we were impressed by the help you have provided for children in Romania. We hope that you continue as you are, good Wesham children, and wish you well in your futures, wherever they might take you.

Eric Jackson, Lead Inspector; Dennis Massey, Additional inspector.