

Singleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119560
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291462
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Foulkes
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2003
School address	Church Road Singleton Poulton-le-Fylde Lancashire FY6 8LN
Telephone number	01253 882226
Fax number	01253 893461

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Almost all pupils attending this small village school are from White British family backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is above average. Children start school with skills that are broadly typical for children of their age. A higher than average proportion of pupils joins the school partway through their primary education. Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, except in the Foundation Stage (Reception class). The school holds a number of awards including Activemark, Investors in People and the Race Equality Charter.

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. It has outstanding features and provides good value for money. It is a very friendly, caring and welcoming school that is particularly highly thought of by parents, who are very proud that their children attend the school. The quality of provision and progress in the Foundation Stage are outstanding, as are pupils' personal development and well-being. Making sure that pupils enjoy learning, are safe and happy and play an active part in the school community are high on the school's agenda. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their future. The outstanding partnerships forged with parents, the local community and beyond make a significant contribution to securing additional funding. This means that the school can improve pupils' learning environment and provide extra resources.

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress as a result of good teaching and learning and a good curriculum. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards are above average. The rate at which pupils make progress, however, varies between subjects and classes. In science, pupils make outstanding progress and reach well above average standards because of particularly high-quality teaching of pupils of all ages. In contrast, in English, pupils' progress is satisfactory and standards are average. Pupils reach higher standards in reading than they do in writing. The school has already identified that writing is a priority for improvement. Recent adaptations to the curriculum are already promoting higher achievement in writing, especially between Years 3 and 6, where pupils have good opportunities to practise their writing skills in a motivating and stimulating way in other subjects.

Pupils make greatest gains in learning between Years 3 to 6. This is because teachers question pupils very well and make immediate assessments of how much pupils are learning. As a result, they are able to provide stimulating and exciting work that challenges pupils to achieve more. Furthermore, pupils benefit from regular discussions with adults about how well they are getting on. This encourages pupils to reflect on their own progress, and teachers' guidance is further underpinned by good quality marking. These good practices are yet to be consistently applied in Years 1 and 2.

A strong sense of teamwork that promotes good achievement in a very caring and supportive environment underpins the good leadership, management and governance of the school. The headteacher is instrumental in bringing about improvement because of the high priority she places on the professional development of staff at all levels. Standards, especially in science and in information and communication technology (ICT), the enrichment of the curriculum and the quality of the learning environment are all examples of good improvement. This, along with the accurate identification of further improvements required, for example in writing, demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to improve further. Nevertheless, the rate at which pupils make progress in Years 1 and 2, as identified at the previous inspection, remains an issue to tackle. This is because leaders, managers and governors do not always keep a close enough eye on pupils' progress across the school in order to highlight where to improve the quality of teaching and learning or further refine the curriculum to bring about the overall outstanding achievement they strive for.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils in Years 1 and 2 are consistently challenged to enable them to reach higher standards.

- Ensure consistency in teaching, particularly in checking how well pupils progress, so that pupils in Years 1 and 2 progress as well as those in Years 3 to 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good. Standards are above average. When children start in the Foundation Stage, their skills are similar to those expected for their age, although the small number of children in each year means that there can be significant differences from year to year. The strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development, combined with a wonderful range of stimulating and exciting activities, ensures that learning gets off to a flying start. Significant improvements to provision in this class mean that the vast majority of children achieve well and make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1 a good proportion exceed the goals set nationally.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress and standards are average by the end of Year 2. This is an improvement on the below average standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. Although pupils who took tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 reached average standards overall, this represents good progress from the below average starting points for this group of pupils. Pupils in Year 6 reach higher standards in mathematics and science than they do in English. Since 2003, standards in science have risen dramatically and are well above average. Furthermore, standards in ICT are above average. In English, although progress is satisfactory, pupils make greater gains in reading than they do in writing. The school has accurately identified a need to improve achievement in writing and has taken swift action. Initiatives to improve pupils' writing, especially for older pupils, are starting to pay dividends. There are more pupils on track to achieve a level higher than expected for their age than previously in writing in the 2007 national tests in Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils really enjoy school, as reflected in the above average attendance. Pupils are extremely polite and their behaviour is excellent. They show a great sense of pride in their school, their own achievement and that of their peers. This is because achievement is valued highly and celebrated often. As a result, pupils say that they are motivated to rise to the high expectations of them. The way that they show concern for the welfare of one another and manage their own feelings is an example of their outstanding spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Older pupils intuitively watch out for the younger ones in order to help them to feel safe and happy in school. Children in the Foundation Stage quickly develop a keen sense of right and wrong. This, along with the outstanding curriculum provision, promotes an early love of learning. From this point, pupils grow and mature into confident young adults, well prepared for life beyond Year 6. Pupils know that their views are always taken very seriously. They delight in the many opportunities that they have to make their school a happier, safer and healthier place; for example, as school councillors or 'play pals'. Pupils are very eager to taste the wonderful range of fruit and vegetables they help to grow in their school grounds, and they know that this helps them to keep healthy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Enthusiastic teaching makes a strong contribution to pupils' good achievement and improving standards. Pupils respond well to the lively and stimulating activities and rise to the high expectations of them to work hard. Although overall teaching and learning are good, there are also examples of outstanding teaching; for example, in science, where pupils of all ages show a real thirst for learning. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from highly skilled teaching and are well supported by caring teaching assistants. In this class, adults work together closely to ensure that work is well adapted to meet children's individual learning needs. Pupils between Years 3 and 6 make good progress because teachers use careful questioning of individual pupils' knowledge. This allows them to make immediate and ongoing assessments of learning so that they can provide work that builds on what they already know and can do. Consequently, pupils say they always feel challenged to achieve more. Teachers use good quality marking that guides pupils and helps them improve their work. This level of challenge and careful questioning of what pupils have learned and understood is not always evident in Years 1 and 2 and, as a result, progress is slower.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to make good progress. A strong focus on providing an enriching curriculum that enlivens learning makes a significant contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their outstanding personal development. Pupils' participate enthusiastically in all that is on offer. They say how much science inspires them and thoroughly enjoy the many scientific challenges provided. In Years 5 and 6, pupils benefit from a well-adapted curriculum that promotes higher achievement in writing. Through drama, for example, and carefully thought out creative links between learning in literacy and other subjects of the curriculum, pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise their skills in a motivating and stimulating way. This is already contributing to lifting standards in writing by Year 6. However, further adaptations are needed to the curriculum in Years 1 and 2, in order to ensure that pupils make equally good gains in their learning, particularly in writing. In these lessons, the use of worksheets limits opportunities to write creatively and restricts the progress of older pupils and those capable of reaching a higher level of attainment. Despite the lack of space in the hall for physical activities, the school makes the most of its partnerships within the locality to ensure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to keep themselves fit. This is reflected in the achievement of the Activemark award.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Effective procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Staff know pupils very well and keep a close eye on their personal development. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive and pupils are confident that they can approach staff to help them to overcome any difficulties. This strong focus on care and individual support reflects the strong Christian and family values that underpin school life. It is no surprise, therefore, that children in the Foundation Stage and those pupils who join the school partway through their primary education settle very easily into school life. Pupils with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities make good progress because of the support they receive to meet the carefully devised targets in their individual education plans. Older pupils have a good understanding of how well they are getting on and how they can improve. This is because they discuss their learning with adults and are encouraged to reflect on their own progress. These good practices, however, are not consistent across the school, especially in Years 1 and 2.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A strong sense of unity and teamwork underpins the good leadership, management and governance of the school. The headteacher values highly the contribution of everyone. As a result, staff are keen to ensure that they pull together to make the school happy, inclusive and particularly well thought of by parents. The professional development of all staff is always high on the school's agenda. As a result, improvement since the previous inspection is good; for example, there are significantly higher standards in science and there is a better quality curriculum. The headteacher works tirelessly in partnership with others, including parents, the local community and external support agencies, to secure additional funds for the school. This is seen in the very high quality of learning resources both inside and outdoors. Through good self-evaluation, leaders, managers and the good quality governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and have identified where things can be better. They know, for example, that pupils could do better in writing and have taken appropriate steps to put this right. However, the rate of progress that pupils make in Years 1 and 2, although improved since the previous inspection, is still in need of some improvement. This is because there are inconsistencies in checking how well pupils' learning is progressing.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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.

Annex A

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

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Singleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Lancashire, FY6 8LN

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school, for making me feel a part of your school family and for helping me to see why you enjoy coming to school so much. You answered all my questions very thoughtfully. You are very kind and caring and your behaviour is really good all the time. I particularly enjoyed seeing so many of you singing joyfully in church. I can see why many of you told me that you enjoy science. You have lots of chances to take part in many exciting activities that help make your school a happier and safer place to learn. All the adults care a great deal. They give you lots of encouragement to do well and to grow in confidence. I was very impressed with how well you all look after one another, and your school grounds, including your vegetable garden. It is good to hear that you know that eating fruit and vegetables helps to keep you healthy. No wonder you feel so very safe and happy in your school.

Your school is a good school. You do well with your learning, and the school makes sure that you are well prepared for going to secondary school at the end of Year 6. Your headteacher works hard to make sure that all other adults that work or help in school make things even better for you. Adults are helping you to do as well in English, particularly in writing, as you do in mathematics and science. However, there is still more that can be done. This is why I have asked your school to make sure that:

- you do as well in your learning in Years 1 and 2 as you do when you are in the Reception class and in Years 3 to 6
- teachers keep a closer check on where you are learning well and how you might be able to do even better.

You can help by:

- making sure that you tell your teacher if your work is too easy or too hard
- checking all the time what you still have to do to reach your targets
- continuing to try your very best in everything that you do.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector