

Lea Neeld's Endowed Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119567
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291466
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Jackie Barnes

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	109
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joyce Greenall
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Middlemiss
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003
School address	Lea Road Preston Lancashire PR4 0RA
Telephone number	01772 729880
Fax number	01772 733790

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a semi-rural location on the western outskirts of Preston. It serves a local community of mixed owner-occupied and rented housing, with a few families travelling from further afield. Most families have at least one parent in paid work and entitlement to free school meals is low. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A lower than usual proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

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 that has improved rapidly over the last year. Its strength is the family atmosphere in which pupils' good personal development and well-being is effectively nurtured through effective day-to-day care and guidance. Parents particularly appreciate this aspect of the school's work and the number of pupils on roll has been maintained against the national trend. Pupils enjoy school and there is a good take-up of the voluntary sports activities and clubs. Almost all attend well and behaviour is good. They make friends readily, and know how to keep safe and healthy. The school has a sound curriculum, which is used well to support the achievement of the most capable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and overall standards are average. A decline in pupils' progress has been largely halted in the last year and most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Children make good progress in the Reception Year, from a wide range of starting points. Interesting, practical activities and good support from staff are successful in helping them to explore and investigate their own ideas, as well as gaining the early skills of literacy and numeracy. By the time they enter Year 1, most pupils are working securely within the levels expected for their age, with a higher than usual proportion exceeding these. Good progress continues for the next two years, and overall standards by Year 2 are above average, especially in writing. National assessment results for Key Stage 1 indicate that the most capable pupils attained particularly well.

In recent years, national test results for Key Stage 2 have been below average and the progress of many pupils has been too slow. The work undertaken in the current year on improving the school's systems for assessment, and especially for tracking the gains made by individual pupils, has helped to accelerate the rate of progress made by most pupils. Most pupils are now attaining at least average standards, and the provisional national test results for 2007 indicate that close to half the Year 6 pupils have attained the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics, which is a considerable improvement from the previous year. The school has been less successful in improving the progress of a small number of lower attaining pupils who have not attained the levels expected for their age in science and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers and pupils have good relationships, which encourage participation in discussion and willingness to contribute ideas. In the best lessons, pupils are taught new skills effectively and shown how to improve their work with a level of challenge that is well matched to their different abilities. All lessons are carefully prepared but in many the pupils' learning does not always build well on what they already know. This is mainly because the assessment information now available for individual pupils is not used precisely enough when planning teaching and tasks for pupils with different abilities. Sometimes the pupils find the work too hard or too easy, and this slows their progress, especially for the less capable pupils in mathematics and science. The teaching team work well together and over the last year have developed their skills and their practice, making a significant contribution to the improvements in pupils' progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The good leadership of the headteacher has resulted in rapid improvement in the school since her appointment. Essential systems, such as those for checking pupils' progress and standards, have been overhauled, and a positive attitude to further improvement is clearly evident among all those involved in the school, including

governors. Staff with responsibilities have provided good support for the headteacher in the initial changes that have been made. However, the role of these staff in leading the next stage of school improvement is yet to be determined clearly enough. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science by Year 6, especially for those lower attaining pupils not yet attaining the expected levels for their age.
- Plan pupils' learning more rigorously, taking full account of the assessment information available and ensuring pupils of all abilities have a suitable level of challenge in lessons.
- Clarify the roles of the senior leadership and management team in promoting achievement so all pupils makes the best progress they can.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain standards that are broadly average by the time they leave school. On intake to the Reception class, the children vary widely in what they know and can do, and this varies considerably from year to year. They all make good progress, especially in areas of learning related to literacy and numeracy. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most attain at least as well as others of their age nationally, with many exceeding these expectations. In Years 1 and 2, the good progress continues, and is reflected in the national assessment results for the last few years, which have been on an improving trend and in 2006 were above average especially in writing. In previous years, the school's weakness has been in Key Stage 2, with national test results by Year 6 indicating standards were too low and the progress of most pupils too slow. Recent changes have made a significant difference to this picture. Pupils' books and their work in lessons, as well as the school's new data systems, show progress accelerating, especially in recent months. The provisional results of the 2007 national tests for Year 6 indicate an improvement over the previous year, especially by the most capable pupils where almost half the pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics. Overall standards are higher in English than they are in mathematics and science. This is because some lower attaining pupils do not do as well as they should. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress throughout the school, mainly due to the regular individual support they receive from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. From the Foundation Stage onwards, their self-esteem develops well with consistent support and example from staff, and by Year 6 most are confident mature individuals who take their responsibilities to others in the school community seriously and know how to enjoy themselves. They say they feel safe in school and trust staff to help them if they have a problem. The school has close links with the church and faith community and these contribute effectively to their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Throughout the school, pupils support each other well, in the playground and in lessons, making allowances for the small minority who find good behaviour difficult,

and applying themselves well in lessons. Their personal skills, such as working together in reasonable harmony, having good manners, sharing resources, considering the views of others and their growing competence in literacy and numeracy form a good basis for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The small teaching team have responded well to improving their professional skills, changing the year groups they teach, and contributing to new planning and assessment systems. Teaching in lessons is at least satisfactory with examples of good teaching where the learning for pupils with different abilities is clearly identified and well matched to their needs. However, too few lessons are planned to provide a suitable level of challenge for the wide range of ability in each class. Teachers know their subjects and pupils well, and are increasingly successful in ensuring that the most capable pupils make the best progress they can. Most lessons are interesting and pupils are keen to learn. Resources to support practical work, especially in mathematics, are often limited in quantity and suitability for the age group, which slows the progress of some lower attaining pupils when they are trying to grasp a new idea.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school's curriculum is satisfactory. At present, there are regular opportunities for pupils to be taught all the required academic subjects, particularly literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology; a European language and a series of lessons to help with their personal development, plus good additional provision of clubs and sporting activities. Overall, this curriculum provision encourages pupils to enjoy school and develop their personal skills well. It is less effective in providing a clear route for all pupils to make the best progress they can. The school has recognised this and, sensibly, has already begun a review to identify opportunities for teachers to plan and consolidate pupils' learning across different subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Staff take good care of pupils and advise them well in their personal development, although less so in their academic progress. Pupils trust staff to help them in lessons or with personal issues, and to keep them safe. The school gives good attention to safety issues, and arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this is a major contribution to their good progress. The pupils' knowledge of how to improve their work is limited, although they have targets; this is an aspect already included in the school's improvement plan.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has successfully led a programme of improvement over the last year that has largely arrested the decline in pupils' achievement and standards, and regenerated the staff's enthusiasm for school improvement. A thorough review of the school's strengths and weaknesses has produced accurate priorities for improvement. Although the impact of many of the changes is at an early stage, there is clear improvement in the progress of many pupils and the standards achieved by the more capable pupils. The governing body has increased its knowledge of the school and provides positive support for the new initiatives. Resources have been improved but remain basic in books and equipment. The budget is balanced, although with few reserves. The local authority is working in close partnership with the school, providing well-targeted professional development for staff, and also valuable support for the governing body in ensuring that plans for improvement are closely monitored and effective. A clear plan for further improvement is in place. The headteacher has appropriately provided the main leadership to date. The role of other staff in leading the next stage of school improvement is yet to be determined. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	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	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	2

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.

Annex A

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

16 July 2006

Dear Children

Inspection of Lea Neeld's Endowed Church of England Primary School, Preston, Lancashire, PR4 0RA.

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. You helped me to see how well behaved you are and how much you enjoy school, especially meeting your friends. You take care of each other and the staff take good care of you. I was pleased to hear that you felt safe in school and that the improvements you suggested for the playground have worked so well. You know how to keep yourselves safe and healthy, and you enjoy taking part in sports and practical activities; such as art. The school community benefits from the way you look after the building and keep the grounds tidy, and you are very knowledgeable about recycling. Most of you make satisfactory progress in your work and many of you attain high standards, especially in English. Your parents are very pleased with you.

I think some of you could do even better, so I have asked your headteacher and governors to watch closely that you are all making the very best progress you can in all your subjects. I have also asked them to make sure that your work is not too easy or too hard, but just right for each of you. I know all the staff will help you, and that you will continue to behave well and try hard to reach your targets as quickly as you can.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

J M Barnes

Lead Inspector