



Preston St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119603
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291477
Inspection dates 3–4 October 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	New Hall Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Preston, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	3–11		PR1 5XB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 794482
Number on roll (school)	425	Fax number	01772 655481
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Canon A D Walkden
		Headteacher	Mr R Small
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 3–4 October 2006	Inspection number 291477
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Matthew's Church of England Primary School has an above average number of pupils on roll. It is situated in an inner city area where there is a high degree of social deprivation. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well above that in most schools. The school has an above average number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost two thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language, with a high percentage in the Foundation Stage at a very early stage of learning to speak English. When children start school they have well below average skills.

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 and provides good value for money. The inspection confirmed the school's accurate evaluation of its own overall effectiveness. There are several outstanding features. These include the high quality care and guidance pupils receive and the highly successful way the school ensures that pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds are included fully and achieve and attain well.

Children start school with well below average skills. All groups of pupils achieve well so that, by the time they leave, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. In the 2006 Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests, almost 90% of pupils achieved the expected level in mathematics and science and just over 80% did so in English. A high percentage of pupils reached the higher level in mathematics and science but fewer did so in English. The school rightly recognises that writing standards need to improve. Good quality provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress. However, by the time they enter Year 1 they have not achieved what is expected nationally. The school has compelling evidence that by the end of Year 2 most pupils will achieve the expected standards in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing are below average but show a good improvement on the previous year. The good support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they achieve well. The same is true of the support provided for pupils who learn English as an additional language.

The quality of teaching and learning is good with classroom support staff of an exceptional quality, including staff with bi-lingual and tri-lingual skills. As a result, pupils make good progress. A key factor is the strong emphasis placed on ensuring that the work set is exciting and interesting to do. All teachers make good use of assessment information to ensure work is matched well to pupils' needs. However, opportunities are missed to allow pupils to use their writing skills well in other subjects.

The school is too cautious in its assessment that the curriculum is satisfactory. Inspectors judge it to be of a good quality. It is enhanced by a very good range of well planned activities. However, in the Foundation Stage, the outside area is not fully incorporated into the range of experiences children receive. Outstanding improvements have been made to the internal building with the result that pupils are taught in a highly stimulating environment. Parents feel strongly that the school meets their children's needs well. One parent commented, 'The school works very hard with the parents and children to ensure they do well.'

The outcomes of the school's provision relating to the 'Every Child Matters' initiative are of good quality. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to keep healthy and talk with great authority about what makes a healthy packed lunch. Pupils say they are very happy and feel safe. Opportunities for pupils to act as 'buddy' partners and to be school council members ensure that they develop the skills to enable them to make a positive contribution to the school community. Pupils display a good sense of responsibility for their school and enjoy being involved in decision making. They enjoy lessons and show a very high degree of care for each other. They are developing

well the skills needed for their future well-being, including a good awareness of the world of work through planned links with industry.

Leadership and management are good. The inspection findings did not identify anything the school was not aware of which bears testimony to the accuracy of its self-evaluation. The monitoring of teaching and learning and other areas of the school's work is regular, rigorous and shared, ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Governors carry out all their duties well and are rightly proud of the school's Christian ethos. The record of continued high standards and improvement stemming from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher means the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills in other subjects in order to raise standards.
- Ensure the outside environment is incorporated effectively into all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Children's prior learning is much lower than usual when they start school. They make good progress and achieve well so that, by the end of the Reception year, attainment has also improved, but remains below expectations for this age.

Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 but did not reach the expected levels by the end of Year 2 in the most recent tests. The school has compelling evidence to show that standards in reading and mathematics are likely to be in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 this year. Inspection evidence indicates that the catch up initiatives put in place to raise standards are working well. However, standards in writing remain below average but show some signs of improvement. Pupils make accelerated progress throughout Key Stage 2 and standards are above average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Higher attaining pupils achieve well. The school sets demanding targets for Year 6 pupils that are higher than those recommended by the local authority, and not only meets them but exceeds them. The school's very good use of assessment information is the key to the school's success in ensuring all pupils achieve well. There are no significant gender differences in results. The well above average number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because work is matched well to their needs. Two-thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language and they too make good progress because of the effective support they receive from both teachers and support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are good overall. The school has received a Quality Mark for Healthy Eating and pupils know how exercise will benefit their health and well being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils from different cultures and faiths acknowledge the differences and recognise the similarities between them. The school arranges exchange visits with schools in different socio-economic areas which contribute to the awareness of the cultures and values of other faiths.

Pupils show respect for each other and there is no evidence of racism or bullying in school. Children who experience learning, behavioural and emotional problems are cared for very well as are looked-after children. Pupils are polite and well behaved. The children's enjoyment of school is reflected in their enthusiasm and their good attitudes to learning. One child commented, 'This school is the best, it has got all the learning equipment you need.' Attendance is below average but improving. The school is doing all it can to address the major cause of absence which is children taking extended holidays in India and Pakistan.

Members of the school council take their responsibilities very seriously. They show an interest in raising issues which will benefit the school community; for example, they are anxious to maintain the harmony of the school community where everyone continues to live and work together well. The eco committee explores the environmental issues which are important to them, for example, the recycling of waste materials.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school correctly judges teaching and learning to be good. Good relationships between teachers and pupils mean that little time is wasted in lessons because pupils respond well to teachers' clear and consistent expectations of their behaviour. A key factor in the good teaching and learning is the strong emphasis placed on ensuring that the work set is exciting and interesting to do. The school has a wealth of assessment data that are carefully analysed to provide a clear picture of individual progress. This enables teachers to plan their lessons knowing where pupils are up to and what they need to do next, so that work is usually matched appropriately to pupils' needs. The successful use of data can be seen in the improvements managed in reading in Years 1 and 2. However, opportunities are missed to raise standards in writing by not allowing pupils to use their skills in other subjects well enough. Teachers and teaching assistants provide a high level of individual support that makes a considerable contribution to the good progress of pupils of all levels of attainment, including those at an early stage of learning English. Pupils' additional learning needs are well understood and carefully targeted support enables good progress to be made.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school thinks its curriculum is satisfactory; however, the inspection judges it to be good. What is taught in lessons is enriched by the contribution of visitors and the many opportunities for visits that pupils have. The curriculum is carefully planned and organised and the strong ethos of inclusion helps all the children, whatever their needs, to build effectively on their skills and knowledge. This has been successful in improving provision and pupils' progress. The personal, social and health education programme is highly effective, for example, in dealing with the dangers of drug abuse. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Good curricular links with other primary schools and local high schools smooth transition. The limited outdoor provision for children in the Foundation Stage restricts opportunities for outdoor activities to be a regular part of their learning experience. Pupils and parents said how much they appreciate the wide and varied range of extra-curricular activities. At the time of the inspection, pupils in Year 3 had a visit from a former member of staff playing the role of Boudicca to enliven their history project. Residential opportunities for all are offered in Years 5 and 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All staff are dedicated and work hard to establish a very caring community where every member of the school is valued equally. There is a highly effective personal, social and health education programme. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and healthy and are supervised well both in school and in outdoor areas.

Risk assessments are carried out for visits and the quality and use of equipment. Child protection procedures are comprehensive and effective. Pupils state that they have very little knowledge of bullying or racism. Parents and pupils are encouraged to approach any member of staff if they have particular concerns. Pupils make use of a 'worry box' where they can communicate their worries to teachers by written note. The school ensures that all pupils are safeguarded. All pupils have targets set to guide their learning and raise standards. They are aware of these targets and work hard to achieve them. Guidance for pupils is based on thorough, careful assessments.

There are close links with a wide range of outside agencies including industrial links. The school works closely with parents to establish mutual trust and understanding. The involvement of parents in children's learning, through workshops and working in school, is enabling standards to continue to improve. The contribution of the multi-lingual staff is invaluable in maintaining good communications.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management, with a strong emphasis on teamwork, set the tone for a school that aims for high standards and is constantly striving to improve aspects

of its work. A clear set of values and aspirations gives the school a strong impetus to improve. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. He initiates school improvement and has a strong focus on ensuring that each child is doing as well as possible. The school has made significant progress since the previous inspection with, for example, good quality special needs and information and communication technology provision now in place. Subject leaders are empowered, taking active leadership roles and effectively contributing to improvement. Much information is gathered about the school's performance which gives a largely accurate picture of its effectiveness. It modestly judged the curriculum to be satisfactory recognising the emphasis there has been on developing basic skills, without fully recognising how well opportunities are planned through the enriched curriculum. The school has been successful in raising standards in a number of aspects of its work. For example, it identified low standards in aspects of English, mathematics and science and targeted action has led to significant improvement. Such successes show that it is well placed to raise standards further. Governance is good. Governors understand the main issues influencing the school's performance and are rightly proud of its strong Christian ethos. Parents' and pupils' views are sought and both groups think highly of the school.

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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	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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?	1

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	1
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	1
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

Preston St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

New Hall Lane

Preston

Lancashire

PR1 5XB

9 October 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for helping my colleagues and me during the inspection. I would like to tell you about my findings. You will not be surprised to know that I found your school to be a good school. We enjoyed being with you, watching you learn and talking to you. It was good to hear you sing during assembly despite the CD player breaking down! The list below shows some of the many things I liked about your school.

- You work hard and are polite and friendly.
- The school's council members, past and present, enjoy having a say in what goes on in your school.
- You get on really well with each other.
- You achieve well, especially in English, mathematics and science, and that should help you to get a good job in the future.
- You like your headteacher, teachers and other members of staff and the way they make learning exciting.
- 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 two things to make your work even better.

- To make sure they help you improve standards in writing further by giving you more opportunities to use your writing skills.
- To make sure that those of you in the Foundation Stage [the youngest children] are given every opportunity to make use of the outside area as part of your learning.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates