

Fleetwood Charles Saer Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119277
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	298572
Inspection dates	7–8 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	305
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Johanna Derry
Headteacher	Mr David Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
School address	Grange Road Fleetwood Lancashire FY7 8DD
Telephone number	01253 874787
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school includes a nursery and provides additional provision before and after school. The school is included in the Government's Excellence in Cities project and is part of the Fleetwood Excellence Cluster of schools. There is a high incidence of social and economic problems in the area; the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is much higher than average. When the children enter the Nursery, their development is much less advanced than that usually seen. There is a much higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in most schools and an exceptionally high number of pupils with statements or additional funding for special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Charles Saer Community Primary judges itself as an improving and satisfactory school and the inspection findings agree. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Under the good leadership of the headteacher, the school is successfully implementing well-laid plans to raise achievement and attainment.

Children enter the school with development much less advanced than is usual for their age. Overall, they have a satisfactory start to their education in the Foundation Stage with some good progress seen in the Nursery. The children's personal and social skills are well developed but their communication and language skills remain weak by the end of the Reception class. In the 2006 tests for Year 6, the results were below average and achievement was inadequate. The school introduced better systems for assessment and checking of pupils' progress, and teachers raised their expectations of what pupils should achieve. Special teaching groups were introduced to boost learning. As a result of the measures taken, progress has improved and it is now good in Years 2 and 6. In the other classes, there are pockets of good progress, especially in mathematics and reading. Progress in writing is hindered by too few opportunities for pupils to practise writing at length. In science, pupils do not have enough investigative and problem solving work. Due to the short time span and the amount of catch-up work needed, attainment remains below average overall for Year 6 but is close to average in mathematics. In Year 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the standards expected for their age has increased, showing that the underachievement of previous years has been eliminated. Pupils who have learning or emotional difficulties make good progress because they have good support and programmes of work tailored to meet their needs.

Personal development, including behaviour, is good and a strength of the school. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community; for example, older pupils act as 'buddies' to younger ones. Such experience of responsibility prepares them satisfactorily for life in the wider world. Parents have confidence in the school and especially appreciate the standard of care. One wrote, 'The level of support that both my children and I have received cannot be faulted.'

Teaching is satisfactory overall and some is good. Interesting and practical tasks ensure that pupils are well motivated and enjoy their learning. In most lessons, teachers provide a good level of challenge but this is not consistent across all classes. The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils are enthusiastic about the interesting range of out-of-school clubs. A strong emphasis on personal, social and health education enables pupils to make informed choices about their lifestyles and they learn to deal with social and moral issues. Good attention is paid to safeguarding pupils and very profitable links with outside agencies contribute a great deal to pupils' learning and well-being.

Working as a determined team, the headteacher and staff have driven through good improvements over the last year, taking advantage of the expert help provided by the local authority. The morale of the staff is good and the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching of communication, language and literacy skills in the Foundation Stage.
- Increase opportunities in all subjects for writing at length.

- Increase opportunities in science for investigation and problem-solving.
- Ensure consistently good challenge for pupils in lessons.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory although standards are below average. Children enter the Nursery with low levels of knowledge and weak skills for their age, especially in language and personal development. Their progress through the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall and is good in the Nursery. When pupils start in Year 1, their attainment is well below average, largely because many have significant difficulties with language.

New systems have been introduced in Years 1 to 6 for checking pupils' progress and setting challenging targets for learning. Any underachievement is identified and tackled quickly. As a result, progress has improved and is now good in Years 2 and 6. The results of the Year 2 teachers' assessments for 2007 show that the percentage of pupils attaining the level expected for their age in all three subjects is in line with national averages for previous years. This means that the underachievement seen in previous years has been overcome and these pupils have a more secure platform for their Key Stage 2 work. There are pockets of good progress across school where challenging targets have been met. Progress is better in mathematics than in English and science. This is because language skills are not well enough developed when children leave the Reception class and there are insufficient opportunities for the junior pupils to practise and consolidate their writing skills. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of science are satisfactory but their skills of problem solving and investigation are not developed well enough.

Pupils with learning or emotional difficulties are given good support and make good progress. The girls' achievement has improved and is now equal to that of the boys.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy school; they respond positively to the good care taken of them and behave well. They say that the few incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and that they feel safe. Largely as a result of a valued reward system and the introduction of a breakfast club, attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Pupils explain why a healthy lifestyle, including regular exercise and a balanced diet, is important. In personal, social and health education lessons and assembly, pupils reflect on a wide range of issues that helps them to make sense of their experiences and to cope with problems.

Through the work of the school council, pupils learn about being good citizens. They make good contributions towards enhancing aspects of school life and take pride in their work in the community. Pupils take responsibility for a range of jobs throughout school. This is good and helps to prepare the pupils for the next phase of education. However, pupils' basic skills of literacy and numeracy are only satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good practice, especially in the Nursery and Years 2 and 6. Across all age groups, relationships in lessons are very good and pupils trust their teachers. This means that they develop good attitudes to learning and a willingness to persevere with tasks. Special teaching groups are successful in providing a boost to progress in English and mathematics and in helping pupils who need extra help with their learning.

Many worthwhile improvements have been made in teaching but they are not all consistently embedded. In most classes, the work is carefully planned to challenge pupils of all abilities and help them meet their targets; however, in science, work is too often set at one level so that some pupils are not stretched and others find the work too hard. Many lessons include a good amount of practical and oral work which supports the development of pupils' communication skills. However, in some lessons, including those in the Reception class, pupils sometimes listen passively to the teacher for too long. Teachers are developing ways of linking subjects together so that skills and knowledge are consolidated. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length, and insufficient opportunities for problem-solving and investigation in science.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Planning includes clear aims for lessons, especially in English and mathematics. There is good support for pupils who need extra help and the special 'catch-up' programmes are leading to improved learning. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory. The current action plan for the class is aimed at developing more opportunities for children to explore, investigate and become more independent learners.

Teachers have made a start in linking subjects together in order to consolidate vocabulary and new skills learned. More still needs to be done, however, to extend opportunities for writing when studying other subjects. Pupils say that they enjoy the interesting range of after-school clubs and competitions. Their learning is enriched satisfactorily through a range of visits and visitors. Close links with the secondary school enhance the curriculum, for example, in physical education and science.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This aspect of the school's provision is satisfactory overall with good care provided for pupils' personal development. Health and safety issues are given attention and effective child protection procedures are in place. The learning mentor takes a leading role in supporting pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. All adults are proactive in ensuring that small issues are acted upon quickly before they become problems. As a result, pupils are helped to cope with the conventions of school life. One pupil said, 'Teachers understand your problems and comfort you.' Where there is a need for exclusion, good reintegration procedures ensure that the adverse effect on learning is minimised. The new breakfast club provides a good start to the day for many pupils, and is helping to improve punctuality.

A good programme of visits introduces children to the Foundation Stage and they settle quickly. The information from assessments of pupils' work is used effectively to set challenging goals for learning and the pupils' target cards provide clear advice for them on how to improve. In some classes, these are used well; for example, older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning by reviewing their own progress. In other classes, pupils are reminded of their targets less frequently so they are less effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and there are some strengths. The school provides a caring, nurturing environment. It is a calm and welcoming place where all pupils have equal access to everything on offer. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides good leadership. He has driven through a range of important developments this year and, as a result, there are good improvements in attainment and progress. Staff share a commitment to raising standards further and there is a strong sense of pride and determination in the school. The quality of the learning environment is very good and pupils' work is beautifully displayed and celebrated.

New systems for assessing, monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school have been introduced. Senior managers and those for English and mathematics keep a close eye on pupils' progress, together with the quality of teaching and provision. They take action where a need or problem is identified. For example, they are working with staff to improve the provision for writing. Similar systems are not yet in place for science, although plans are in place to introduce them.

The governors are a very supportive group. They understand the strengths of the school and know where further action is needed. The chairperson and vice-chairperson take an active and important part in development planning and in monitoring the success of actions taken. They are keen to develop the role of all governors in this way and are developing a training programme to enable this to happen. At present, governance is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met.

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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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	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	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	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.

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	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	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

9 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fleetwood Charles Saer Community Primary School, Lancashire, FY7 8DD

Thank you very much for the warm, cheerful welcome and for all the help you gave my colleagues and me when we came to visit your school. In return, we would like to tell you what we found out.

Charles Saer is a very friendly school. Your behaviour is good and you all get on well together and take good care of each other. Your teachers and families can be proud of you. Your headteacher and his staff work very hard to make sure you are happy and safe. It is good to see the excellent relationships between you and the adults who teach you. I think the trust you have in your teachers encourages you to try hard and is an important reason why you say you like school.

Please thank your parents for sending us lots of replies to the questionnaire. Most of them are very pleased with the school and they especially like the good care that your teachers provide. You are making better progress now, especially in your mathematics work. Most of you have reached the challenging targets that your teachers set over the last year. However, we think you can do even better in English and science. Your teachers agree and will be introducing ways to help you.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us know your views so clearly. Good luck for the future, keep smiling and continue to enjoy your happy school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Read

Lead inspector