



# Arkholme Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 119523  
**Local Authority** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 300552  
**Inspection dates** 8–9 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Carole Cressey

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Arkholme
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Carnforth, Lancashire
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		LA6 1AU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 221418
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	81	<b>Fax number</b>	01524 221418
<b>Number on roll (day care)</b>	9	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Elton
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lesley Gee
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2003		
<b>Date of previous day care inspection</b>	1 September 2004		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
4–11	8–9 February 2007	300552

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small rural village school. Most children come from White British backgrounds; a very small number are from other backgrounds and have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The attainment of children when they start school is typical for their age. The school shares its headteacher with a neighbouring school. Although many pupils travel from outside the immediate locality there is a strong sense of community.

Arkholme Nursery has been registered for four years. It operates within Arkholme C of E Primary School on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 09:00 to 12:00 or 12:45 during term-time only. Priority for places is given to children who live in the rural catchment area of the school, with nine children on the register, none of whom have special educational needs or English as a second language. Children have the use of two adjoining rooms and access is gained via the rear Nursery entrance and hallway. There are toilet and washbasin facilities and hot snacks are provided by the school kitchen to those children staying at the Nursery until 12.45. An outdoor play area is available within the school playground separated from the school children by barriers. The Nursery staff hold Level 3 qualifications and the Nursery is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The Nursery is supported by a voluntary elected management committee, which reviews policy and practice.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school, which is exceptionally well led and managed. The school's success is due to its very strong Christian ethos where the care, well-being, enjoyment and achievement of every pupil are central to its work. This echoes the remarks of one of the parents who wrote, 'The school has excellent staff, caring attitudes and a wonderful learning environment'.

The school has a very accurate insight into its strengths and weaknesses and as a result, is constantly improving and adapting its provision to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. The headteacher, staff and governors are determined to preserve all that is excellent in this small village school. The governors' decision to work in collaboration with another small school and to share headteachers has freed up valuable finances, staffing, resources, skills and expertise and allowed the school to have a viable future.

Most children attend the school's own excellent part-time voluntary Nursery and this gives them a good start to their education. By the time children enter the Reception class, attainment is typical for their ages. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school and leave in Year 6 with academic standards significantly above those expected for their ages. The school is exceptionally caring and has high aspirations for every one of its pupils. The outstanding way it nurtures those pupils with complex disabilities and difficulties is second to none and as a result, they make excellent progress toward their targets. Parents are very supportive of their children's education. They appreciate the way the reading record books are used as a dialogue between parents and teachers, keeping them fully informed about children's progress at home and in school.

The quality of the teaching and the curriculum are outstanding. As a result, learning in this school, including in the Foundation Stage, is exciting and challenging. Work in lessons is very closely matched to the different abilities and ages in each class. Teachers regularly check with great rigour how well pupils are doing through tests and observations of them at work. The curriculum is excellent and provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities to grasp their imagination and promote very effective learning. The use of the Internet, video conferencing, visits, visitors, drama and sport all help to make learning fun; pupils say they are never ever bored.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Throughout the day, every nook and cranny of this small school is filled with pupils eagerly engaged in learning. All activities, whether they are in lessons, at break time or after school, develop pupils' love of learning and an understanding of how they can stay healthy, keep themselves and others safe and become responsible members of their school and local community. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their excellent attendance.

### What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils consistently attain standards that are significantly higher than average. Excellent teaching ensures that all pupils achieve very well. Children join the Reception class with levels of attainment which are broadly average. They make very good progress and by the time they move into Year 1, the majority are exceeding the learning goals expected for their ages and are well launched into reading and writing. This good start is continued in Years 1 and 2 and at the age of seven, standards overall are significantly above average, especially in reading and mathematics. Pupils continue to work hard in Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 6 their progress is so good that in the latest national tests, pupils were on average one whole year ahead of pupils nationally. Almost all pupils reached the expected level for their ages and over 50% reached the higher levels in mathematics, and over three quarters reach them in English and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well and often reach standards which exceed those expected for their ages. Girls and boys do equally well. The very few pupils with English as an additional language make rapid progress in learning English and quickly catch up with their classmates and reach standards that are above those expected for their ages.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils show considerable exuberance for learning and their attendance rate is very high. There is not a minute of the day when pupils are not involved in some exciting activity. All pupils are exceptionally keen to do well and say that learning is fun. Older pupils enjoy the 'fizz, pop, wiz bang' activity, which they say, helps them to learn their tables without being bored. Being polite, friendly and well behaved is the norm in this extremely happy community. Pupils enjoy each other's company from their early morning meetings before school, through working together in lessons and sharing break times and after-school clubs. They are particularly kind to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who are new to the school or simply those who sometimes might be feeling unhappy or worried. There is a very good understanding of how to deal with bullying. Pupils know that a balanced diet and regular exercise are essential for a healthy lifestyle. The school council takes its role very seriously and is very proud of the impact it is having on the school. Extra toys at break times, 'mufti days' and a hairdryer to use after swimming are just a few of the ways the school council have improved school life for their fellow pupils. Pupils show a very mature responsibility for their local and global community. They are involved in a number of conservation projects and collect considerable sums of money for charities. Through one of their successful financial efforts, they are providing money to pay for the education of two children in Gambia. Pupils have a very good knowledge of their own Christian faith and culture and show considerable respect, understanding and tolerance for other religions and ways of life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Outstanding teaching enables all pupils to achieve well and reach the highest standard they can. Lessons are a buzz with excitement, good humour, warm relaxed relationships and high levels of challenge. Teachers plan lessons meticulously to meet the needs of different ages and abilities in mixed-age classes. Flexible grouping allows pupils who make rapid progress to work in a higher group and similarly those who may be struggling temporarily can work with younger pupils. Pupils themselves think this is a good idea as it helps them understand better, feel more confident and makes sure they work as hard as they can. The teaching of English is particularly effective. Teachers use different teaching styles, tasks and activities to maintain the interest of boys and girls and this has been very successful in raising the standard of writing throughout the school. Pupils are very confident readers and writers and use and practice their literacy skills very effectively in other subjects. Regular homework extends pupils' learning well. They are often so involved in their tasks that they ask to take additional work home to complete. The marking of pupils' work is very good and provides them with information on how they can improve further. Pupils put great store on the help they receive and are very clear about what they need to do to move on to the next level. Regular assessments inform teachers of the level of understanding and progress of each pupil and this is a key tool to the pupils reaching the high standards they do.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is exceptionally well planned to ensure that the small size of the school does not hinder pupils' learning. The school provides a range of exciting activities to challenge the pupils and inspire them to learn. The excellent emphasis throughout the school on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology is making a vital contribution to pupils' future economic well-being. Learning is enriched as pupils use video conferencing with museums to deepen their understanding of a particular topic. Chess, hockey and football are just a few of the clubs pupils can enjoy. The school is even able to offer French and Latin adding a breadth to pupils' learning, which they and their parents value. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to become proficient musicians. Almost half of the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are playing a woodwind or brass instrument and many are so talented that they reach high levels in national examinations. An excellent programme of social and health education provides the pupils with the necessary tools to develop personal safety, care and healthy living. The school compensates for a lack of a school hall by using the village hall and a recently purchased field adjacent to the school so all pupils can have regular exercise.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

One of the main reasons why pupils achieve so well is the school's outstanding level of care, guidance and support. Highly effective procedures are in place to safeguard children's welfare, health and safety. Parents of pupils with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities are overwhelmed and delighted with the exceptionally high level of care and support their children receive from all the staff. Having a disability or difficulty in this school does not prevent a pupil from being a member of the school council, joining the swimming club or achieving the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. Teachers track each pupil's academic progress carefully and set challenging targets to enable pupils to improve. The governing body uses this information well to set very challenging whole-school targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

This forward thinking headteacher and challenging and supportive governing body lead and manage the school with an outstanding vision, resulting in excellence in all aspects of its work. This is central to the school's success in ensuring that standards remain high and all pupils achieve as well as they can and learn to be caring and confident individuals. Leadership is highly successful in combating the limitations of a very small school. The headteacher's enthusiasm and professional skills in bringing together two schools has resulted in staff being able deliver an excellent curriculum for pupils and provide continuity for the future.

Assessments, test results and the quality of teaching and learning are all monitored rigorously to ensure that standards remain high. As a result, standards in writing were identified as an area to improve across the school. Strategies were put in place and standards by Year 6 are now close to those of reading which are very high.

This is not a school that rests on its laurels, when one challenge is achieved another is waiting in the wings. The school is continually looking to the future and planning to ensure that it can meet the challenges and changes of a twenty-first century curriculum.

The school works very well with parents and sees them as equal partners in the education of their children. They value the reading diaries, homework tasks, formal and informal meetings and regular newsletters, which keep them informed about their children's learning. The parents' confidence in the leadership and management of the school is very well placed. The vast majority of parents think their school is excellent. They are spot on. This is an outstanding school and has outstanding capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of registered day care

### Grade: 1

Day care at Arkholme C of E School is outstanding. The enjoyment of children who attend is matched by the confidence parents have in the child care provision. All policies and procedures are robust and actively support the expert practice of staff.

Staff act as extremely good role models in food preparation and hygiene. Children quickly learn very good habits when it comes to handling food at snack and meal times. They understand that fruit is good for them and that, when they are outside, exercise is also important. The indoor areas are very clean, and attractive displays celebrate children's work and achievements. There are interesting, discrete areas that engage children and give them excellent opportunities to work and play alongside others. Most children have reached the significant stage of playing together, sharing and taking turns. Staff use the outside area very successfully to promote children's learning, using large scale equipment to aid physical development alongside creative and imaginative play. Staff have an excellent knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They plan the curriculum very effectively and provide a wide and stimulating range of activities to meet the individual needs of all children. They organise their high quality resources so that they are accessible to the children, thus enabling them to make choices and increasing their opportunities to be independent. Staff observe the children closely as they work and continually update records of the progress that individuals make. They use this information very effectively to support the high standards of teaching and to successfully modify plans for children's next steps. This results in all children making excellent progress across every area of learning.

Children show high levels of confidence and enjoy an excellent sense of emotional and physical security resulting from the outstanding relations they have with adults. Staff talk constantly with the children during activities, and at snack and meal times. They ask questions and listen, with interest, to their ideas and 'news'. Children therefore feel valued and this raises their self-esteem. Behaviour is excellent, especially when considering this early stage in their development. The staff are well qualified and benefit from regular training to support them in their roles. They work very well with parents and value the information they receive from home when a child is enrolled. Parents receive good quality information about the educational provision, are actively encouraged to support their child's learning and are kept very well informed about their child's progress. Continual and rigorous monitoring procedures enable practitioners to maintain high standards of teaching and facilitate children's transitions to school.

Since the last inspection, there have been no complaints about the registered day care that required Ofsted or the school to take action, so that the day care continued to meet the National Standards. The school is required to keep a record of complaints about the registered day care made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints about the registered day care other than those made to Ofsted.



## **Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care**

Not Applicable

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
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	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

## The effectiveness of the registered day care

<b>The quality and standards of the registered day care</b>	1
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	1
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	1
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	1
How effectively is the day care organised?	1
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	No
Does the day care require enforcement action?	Yes
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Arkholme Church of England Primary School

Arkholme

Carnforth

Lancashire

LA6 1AU

12 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for being so friendly and welcoming when I visited your school a short while ago.

You are all very successful and enthusiastic learners who work really hard and behave well. Do you know that your work is a whole lot better than it is in most other schools? You should feel very proud of yourselves! Keep up the good work!

I was particularly pleased to see how very kind and welcoming you are to each other. You understand so well that from time to time some pupils need extra help from you and their teachers. Children from other countries and those with disabilities all receive the friendliest of welcomes at Arkholme School.

You are all very proud of the school council and it was good to know that you think it helps to make your school a better place. What a very good idea to have a hairdryer available after you have been swimming.

I enjoyed having my lunch with you and I definitely agree with you that they are very healthy. The money you have just won to improve school meals even further is a sign of how seriously you take having a balanced diet.

You go to an excellent school where your headteacher and teachers work so hard to make lessons fun and help you learn such a lot. I hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now and that it will help you to become happy and successful adults.

Yours sincerely

Carole Cressey

Lead Inspector