

Nord Anglia Inspections  
Anglia House  
Carrs Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 2LA

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 0161 491 4191  
Direct F 0161 491 4409



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Mrs J. Milligan  
Acting head teacher  
Overton St Helen's Church of England Primary School  
Lancaster Road  
Overton  
Morecambe  
Lancashire  
LA3 3EZ

Dear Mrs Milligan

#### Ofsted Monitoring of Grade 3 Schools

Thank you for the help you and the staff gave when I inspected your school on 26 June 2007. I appreciated the time you gave to our phone discussions and the information which you provided before and during my visit. I also wish to express my thanks to the chair of governors and to the school's local authority link adviser for agreeing to meet with me.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

As a result of the inspection in March 2006, the school was asked to raise the achievement of the more able pupils, and to improve assessment by involving children more fully and using it to monitor the effectiveness of teaching in all subjects. It was also asked to improve the curriculum to create better links between subjects, create more opportunities for independent learning and make better provision for multi-cultural education.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievements.

The school has a clear focus on raising the achievement of all children. A register of gifted and talented pupils has been drawn up. All pupils now have challenging targets for each subject. High expectations for the performance of all pupils have been established and learning objectives with an appropriate level of challenge have been defined for pupils of different abilities in units of work within each subject. These objectives are shared with pupils at the start of lessons and are reviewed at

the end of lessons. In addition, pupils have personal targets in the core subjects to ensure that all pupils are aware of the next steps in their learning. These targets are shared with parents at the two parents' evenings held each year. Marking in books is regular and there are frequent helpful comments to advise pupils on how to improve their work. However, the procedure for the recording of targets is not consistent between classes and subjects and this is a barrier to pupils' understanding of their use. This has been identified as an area for development.

The school has established a new recording system for tracking pupils' progress. Pupil's attainment is monitored regularly against their expected grades in the core subjects and pupils who are in danger of underachieving are identified and appropriate additional support provided. In 2006 the officially published data showed that overall achievement was below the national average, particularly in English and science. The clear learning objectives and planned interventions are beginning to impact on standards, but the impact on achievement is not yet consistent. This reflects a history of underachievement which was related to considerable staffing instability in some classes during the last academic year. Staffing arrangements are stable and achievement is improving. Standards remain above average. There is a newly established system to monitor progress against differentiated objectives in foundation subjects.

The school has appointed a deputy head teacher who has energetically taken on the role of curriculum manager. She has worked with the staff to thoroughly review the curriculum plan for the school. This outlines units of work to deliver the national curriculum through subjects and provides opportunities for topics in which a range of subjects are brought together. There is a focus on planning learning activities which encourage pupils to develop the skills of independent learning and investigation. A good example was seen in a project on rivers which brought together English, mathematics, science and geography. The development of independent learning has been supported through training in how to learn within the personal, social and health education curriculum. A study week with the theme of geography was used to develop an integrated approach to learning. Pupils are also being encouraged to develop their independence through taking on responsibilities within the school and particularly through the work of the school council. The council has, for example, organised a healthy tuck shop and is currently allocating the profits to purchase additional games for the playground.

The curriculum now includes regular opportunities to study issues of current affairs from other world areas. This is raising pupils' awareness of citizenship and other cultures effectively. An example in Year 5 illustrated how pupils had researched issues of child labour and fair trade and had produced a good display of their findings, using information technology. There is a range of other opportunities to study different cultures and religions throughout the curriculum. However, the school has correctly identified the need to establish links with local communities and

other schools with a broader ethnic mix in order to raise pupils' first hand experience of life in multi-cultural England.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Garry Jones  
Her Majesty's Inspector