

Ormskirk Lathom Park Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119371
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313270
Inspection date	12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Dave Byrne

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	36
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Wendy Austin
Headteacher	Mrs Jean O'Brien
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2005
School address	Hall Lane Lathom Ormskirk Lancashire L40 5UG
Telephone number	01704 892375
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small rural school where pupils are educated in two classes. It takes pupils from a wide geographical area. It has a capacity of around thirty although numbers can rise to as many as fifty. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin and none requires support for English as an additional language. Many Year groups are very small with less than five pupils. An above average percentage of pupils in the school has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and statistically can represent as many as fifty percent in a Year group. An above average proportion of pupils starts or leaves school at times other than the normal points of starting and departure.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ormskirk Lathom Park Church of England Primary is a good school. Parents are unanimous in their approval of the quality of education it provides. They are integral partners in their children's education and they work very hard to raise significant funds, which benefits pupils' learning. Many have selected the school for the way it cares for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Their views about the good quality of care are ratified by the inspection findings.

The school is close-knit and has a strong family atmosphere in which individuals are nurtured and valued. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are well cared for; they are safe and secure. The arrangement of mixed age-classes works in the pupils' favour. The interaction between older and younger ones results in pupils developing very good relationships. Pupils develop a good understanding of the choices needed to live safe and healthy lives. They enthusiastically contribute to aspects of the school's running by proudly acting as school councillors and helping others at playtimes.

Achievement is good. A lively curriculum and good teaching gives pupils a love of learning. This is one reason why attendance, for the vast majority, is good. Teaching assistants are an integral part of the good provision. The strengths in provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not, however, matched by that for the more able pupils. Even though they are currently reaching good standards, expectations of this group are not always high enough. Assessment data compared to national statistics must be treated with caution because the very small numbers in some year groups can lead to significant year on year variations. In 2007, results in the national assessments at Year 2 were above average and in Year 6 they were average. The progress of the pupils educated solely in the school is good. Pupils did better in mathematics and science. In English, the pupils' good standards in speaking and reading are not matched in writing where they could be better.

Pupils' learning benefits from a good curriculum that has a wide range of additional activities to make learning fun. Pupils participate in dance performances, visits to science events and are embarking on video conferencing with pupils in other schools. Opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills are not exploited enough which has an adverse effect on their progress in writing.

The school is well led and managed. This ensures that the school has a very caring ethos in which both personal and academic achievement is valued. Staff are a strong team which is constantly striving to improve the school. All decisions for doing this are based on accurate evaluations of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The Governing Body are very supportive and get the best from the budget. Resources are sufficient, the accommodation is well maintained, and the ratio of staff to pupils is very high. Given the current circumstances, the school has a good capacity to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The provision for the children in Reception is included in a mixed-age Key Stage 1 class. This has some advantages because younger children have good role models to aspire to. The status of the Foundation Stage curriculum within the class, however, is not as high as it needs to be. Opportunities for children to make choices and develop independence in their learning are relatively limited. Pupils start school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age

although standards in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy are relatively high. They make good progress towards early reading and writing but in areas such as creative and physical development their progress, although satisfactory, is not as rapid as it could be. Difficulties with the accommodation reduce opportunities for children to learn outdoors. Parents are encouraged from the start of Reception to be partners in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the provision for children of Reception age.
- Improve the progress made by all pupils in writing, and that of the most able pupils across all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Good teaching and high standards of care ensure that pupils achieve well in their time in school. Standards have been rising over recent years, and in 2007 were above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and broadly average at the end of Key Stage 2.

All of the assessment data for the school require sensitive analysis. This is because certain factors within very small Year groups can have a significant impact on statistics. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high in some Years and also an above average proportion of pupils have joined the school during the year. These factors distort comparisons with national data, in particular measurements of progress over time.

Inspection evidence supported by the school's own analysis indicates that the core group of pupils who have been educated solely in the school make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do particularly well, making very good progress towards their individual targets. Standards are higher in mathematics and science than English. Although pupils are relatively articulate and read very well, these good talents are not transferred into their writing. It has particular impact on the standards gained by more able pupils. Although they reach good standards, they have the potential to do even better. A lack of opportunities to write independently in new and challenging circumstances hinders their progress. The school knows this and is developing strategies to improve writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Pupils have an excellent appreciation of how their actions can affect others and they display excellent social skills. Behaviour is excellent and very warm relationships exist at all levels. The school is a close knit community in which everyone looks out for each other. Older pupils naturally help younger ones and willingly help out with many aspects of school life. Pupils' views are valued through the proactive school council and playground helpers proudly wear their yellow bibs indicating their status. The popularity of events such as 'Boxercise' and the pupils' desire to eat sensibly demonstrates their good knowledge and understanding of the choices required to live healthy and safe lives. Essential ideas related to environmental issues are successfully promoted through the pupils care for their mini garden. The large majority of pupils enjoy school which is reflected in good attendance, although statistics can be distorted due to the absence of pupils with complex needs. Although pupils have a good understanding

of their local community, with which the school has very close and productive links, their knowledge of the cultural richness and diversity of modern society is not as advanced as it could be. Given the very good personal development and good academic skills, pupils are well equipped for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. This ensures that the large majority of pupils develop well both in terms of their personal and academic development. An excellent partnership between teachers and teaching assistants means the wide spread of ages within the two classes is well catered for. Lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2 are well planned, reflecting a good knowledge and understanding of the primary curriculum. A good use of assessment successfully guides teachers so that the needs of individuals are met. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well catered for. At times the more able, however, do not have enough opportunities to direct their own learning. The quality of learning is enhanced by using the individual strengths of external specialist staff, for example, sports coaches. The skills of members of the community are used well, for example, during the arts sessions each week. The involvement of pupils in assessing and evaluating their own learning is becoming embedded and is contributing to most pupils making good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

All National Curriculum subjects are taught and pupils benefit from a good range of additional activities provided after school. Good links with other schools and the local community add fun to learning. Some pupils talked enthusiastically about meeting amazing creatures as part of a science day arranged by the nearby higher education institute, and others were inspired by participating in a dance event at a high school. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology are given sufficient emphasis. Opportunities to transfer and extend these basic skills to new and challenging circumstances are not as well planned as they could be. As a result, the achievement of the more able, particularly in writing, is held back. The provision for learning difficulties and/or disabilities is of a high standard but for the more able, it lacks rigour. Visits to places of interest such as Liverpool Museum and a residential trip to the Isle of Man for Key Stage 2 capture pupils' imaginations and boost their love of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school fully complies with requirements to keep pupils safe and secure. The academic progress of pupils is carefully tracked using a combination of teacher's own knowledge and understanding of individual pupils and objective assessments. Where any pupils are falling behind, this is quickly identified and action is taken to give support. Day-to-day care is of a high standard and enables pupils to feel valued as individuals regardless of their abilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The headteacher provides a clear vision for the school's direction. The recent stability in staffing has enabled a collective approach to be developed to management. The headteacher, however, remains the most influential person. Despite the constraints of a very tight budget she makes sure that the school is continually improving. The school's focus on academic standards has been strengthened with the good use of targets for pupil's performance. The school knows itself well and considers the views of pupils and parents in establishing pertinent areas for the school's development.

Since the last inspection, achievement has risen, the quality of teaching has improved and important parts of the accommodation, such as the pupils' toilets, have been upgraded. The governing body meets statutory requirements and is rapidly improving its role, not only as a support, but also in monitoring the school's performance. Excellent support from parents and the community leads to considerable funds being raised for the school. These significantly enhance the pupils' education. Given the current circumstances in the school, it has a good capacity to improve in future.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

13 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ormskirk Lathom Park Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, L40 5UG

I am writing to inform you of my findings after inspecting your school recently. Thank you for talking with me and sharing your time during lessons and lunch.

I agree with you and your parents that your school is good. It gives you a safe and secure place to learn and cares very much for each one of you. You benefit from good teaching overall and a lively and exciting curriculum. I was impressed by the range of activities on offer to you after school and the way you get involved in events with other schools. It is encouraging that you have a good understanding of the importance of eating sensibly and taking exercise. This stands you in good stead for your future happiness and health.

Those of you who find learning difficult for various reasons, are given very good support. This helps you to do very well. For the rest of you, you do well in mathematics and science but I feel that some of you could do better in writing. The school can work with you in finding ways of doing this.

The way you are taught in two mixed-age classes helps you to become mature and caring young people. It can also help some of you to learn by seeing how others work. In Class 1, however, better opportunities could be provided for children in Reception. I have asked the school to think about how this can be done.

I wish you all the very best for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

Dave Byrne

Lead inspector