

Quernmore Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119378
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313273
Inspection date	7 May 2008
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 category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Shackleton
Headteacher	Mrs Kristine Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2005
School address	Postern Gate Road Quernmore Lancaster Lancashire LA2 9EL
Telephone number	01524 66628
Fax number	01524 66628

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether pupils were achieving as well as they can; whether pupils use their basic skills well in other subjects; the use of assessment information; and how strong pupils' personal development is. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school. It serves a rural area but pupils also travel some distance from Lancaster. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A well below average number of pupils receive free school meals. The school has won many awards including the Eco Green Flag award.

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. At the heart of the school's success are excellent leadership and management, which have inspired the creation of an effective environment in which pupils mature into well rounded individuals. The headteacher successfully ensures pupils experience an abundance of very worthwhile opportunities to develop not only their academic skills but also their creative skills. More than that, she has ensured they develop an exceptionally high appreciation of the importance of caring for the environment and also that they actively pursue practical ways to improve it. As a result, pupils extend their horizons and develop new interests and talents. Care and support are exceptional because the academic, social and emotional needs of every child are known by all who work in the school. The systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are of a high quality. As a result, all pupils make excellent progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and potentially high-attaining pupils. Pupils are well placed to make the most of the next stage of their education because they attain well above average standards and their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Parents are highly appreciative of what the school offers. One parent's view sums up that of many, 'The school continues to excel in all areas.'

Children make an excellent start in the Foundation Stage and most enter Year 1 having exceeded what is typical for their age. Throughout the rest of the school they build well on this excellent start to their formal education. As a result, pupils in both Years 2 and 6 consistently attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school's assessment records and the standards seen in the pupils' work show that current pupils are achieving outstandingly well and the well above average standards have been maintained at the ends of both key stages.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Very positive relationships in the classroom lead to pupils enjoying their lessons and recognising and valuing the progress they make. Pupils enjoy their learning because they are presented with stimulating work and are given good quality information about how well they are doing. Questioning is used well to probe pupils' understanding. For example, pupils were challenged to analyse the language used by estate agents in their house selling brochures. They responded readily with their own definitions of expressions such as 'unique situation'. Teachers' planning is very effective in ensuring that the differing needs of pupils are met, including the least and most able. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to lessons. Assessments are used very effectively to ensure pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Older pupils confidently appraise other pupils' work and in turn accept any points for improvements they receive from their fellow pupils about their own work. Teachers' marking is undertaken conscientiously and is encouraging and informative. It forms the basis for the challenging and realistic targets that are set.

Pupils are highly confident, self-reliant and able to work independently. They are extremely sensitive to, and knowledgeable about, the environmental issues that face the world we live in. Behaviour is excellent, attendance rates are above average and pupils enjoy coming to school. Pupils understand the importance of keeping fit and well; they eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. Older pupils accept responsibility by helping to care for the younger children and school council representatives ensure that pupils have a strong voice in the school's development. They have been influential in securing additional equipment for the outside play areas. The members of the school's 'Eco Committee' ensure that the school does all it can to

promote environmental awareness. One pupil commented, 'In this school if something can be recycled, rest assured it is!'

Pupils benefit from an excellent curriculum. They say that learning is fun and never boring. In planning the curriculum no stone is left unturned in ensuring that pupils develop an excellent understanding of environmental issues. Where else can older pupils proudly talk with authority about the fact that the school's very own wind turbine has saved well over 1,700 kilograms of CO₂ emissions in the last 6 months? The school's excellent outdoor resources are used very well. Many trips out of school to explore the area's rich natural heritage and visits to places of interest to broaden pupils' understanding are integral parts of the curriculum. Provision for the performing arts is very strong. It was a joy to hear, for example, pupils playing woodwind instruments during the inspection. School clubs are well attended, including the 'Mad Science Club'. Pupils even have the opportunity to use a drop spindle to spin wool on a spinning wheel. There is very good provision for developing pupils' basic skills, augmented by additional support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and extension work for the highest attaining pupils.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher's passionate belief in providing a high quality, broad and exciting education for all pupils is realised fully. For example, the school grounds have been extended to provide a multitude of experiences for pupils to use and develop their creative, physical and investigative skills. The headteacher is very well supported by the deputy headteacher and other members of staff. School improvement planning is excellent because self-evaluation is extremely rigorous and accurate and built upon wide consultation. As a result, the school has identified appropriate priorities for development. Governors play a significant part in the life of the school and know it well. They ensure that the school is held to account for standards. The school provides excellent value for money and under the current leadership is very well placed to make further progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and experiences typical for their age, and the excellent use made of the inside and outside environment ensures that all pupils get the best possible start to school life. Children make outstanding progress in the Foundation Stage. As a result, they exceed the levels expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The children are encouraged to settle into routines and experience an exciting and practical curriculum, which is extremely well taught. Teaching is very good at helping children gain confidence and sample the great variety of activities and resources especially in the attractive outside area. A trip to a local garage was used very well as a stimulus for children to create and use their own 'Quick Fix Garage' to develop not only their creative skills but also their writing and numeracy skills. Children learn very rapidly and thrive on the excellent care. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed with a very good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no issues that the school has not already identified

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Quernmore Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Lancashire, LA2 9EL

What a wonderful school you have! I have never been in a school that has its own wind turbine before!

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you all gave me when I visited the school recently. I really enjoyed my time with you and seeing some of you in lessons, even if it was only for a short time. I would have loved to have become friendly with the school cat! I was very impressed by the school's woodwind musicians.

I am pleased to tell you that your school is one of the very best I have been in and that you attend a really outstanding school. You do outstandingly well in lessons and in tests because you work hard and understand the importance of this for the future. I agree with you that your teachers and other adults make lessons very interesting and that you receive all the help you need.

Your behaviour is excellent and I was very impressed with how polite you were. You were all very busy and active at lunchtime and you benefit from very large playgrounds and the wonderful way they have been developed. You told me that you feel safe in school and that if a problem occurs then an adult will sort it out quickly when you tell them about it. The school council is very busy on your behalf and members enjoy being able to take new things forward to make life better for you.

Keep on working hard and as a result you can carry on playing a major part in ensuring that your school continues to be highly regarded by all who come into contact with it.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector