

Appley Bridge All Saints Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119497
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313317
Inspection dates	6–7 March 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 aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Debbie Leyland
Headteacher	Miss Jane Phythian
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2003
School address	Finch Lane Appley Bridge Wigan Lancashire WN6 9DT
Telephone number	01257 252647
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a below average size primary school in a rural area where socio-economic conditions are broadly average. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has a well above average level of pupils joining the school other than at the normal time of entry. It has achieved many awards including the National Healthy Eating award, the Sports' Activemark and Eco awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

All Saints School provides a good education for its pupils with some aspects of its work of an outstanding quality. Pupils achieve above average standards and are a delight to meet. The level of care the school provides and pupils' personal development and well-being are excellent. The very strong Church school ethos is apparent in all aspects of school life. The school's mission statement refers to, 'everyone supporting and trusting each other' and this is evident in every aspect of its work. This is striking in the happy and caring atmosphere, which enables pupils to feel safe and secure. The very effective leadership of the headteacher, good use of assessment information and the way that all members of staff promote learning experiences matched well to pupils' needs, are amongst the many reasons why this school is successful. The overwhelming majority of parents hold the school in very high regard and comment positively on progress, management and communication with them. One parent's statement sums up their views well, 'Our children are happy at All Saints and the school stimulates them in all sorts of ways, not just academically.'

Pupils begin Year 1 with abilities slightly above those typical for their age. Pupils across the school are successfully helped to sustain good progress. In recent years they have reached significantly high standards compared to the national average in the Year 2 national teacher assessments. Overall results in national tests for Year 6 pupils have been above the national average over the past five years, including the most recent results for 2007. In recent years standards in writing for higher attaining pupils have not matched those achieved in other subjects. The school has properly identified writing as a key area for further attention. Its work has already improved the range and quality of writing in literacy lessons but there is only limited evidence of writing being used well in subjects, such as geography and history. The school's accurate assessment systems clearly demonstrate that current standards in English, mathematics and science are above expected levels at the end of both key stages.

This good school enables pupils to develop into mature and confident young people. The school places a high priority on ensuring pupils' emotional well-being, so that they are happy in school and enjoy living and learning together. Pupils are kind to each other, respect each others' differences and take on responsibilities willingly. They attend school regularly and speak of it enthusiastically. They know how to keep safe and healthy and make sure others are safe as well. Their behaviour is exemplary.

Good teaching and a good curriculum ensure that pupils achieve well. Lessons are interesting and teaching styles capture the interest of pupils while maintaining a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are encouraged to work with their teachers to evaluate and comment on their own learning. A rich range of experiences is provided through theme weeks such as 'Maths is magical week'. Pupils gain very good first hand experiences through frequent trips to places of interest, including spending time in France.

Leadership and management is good overall. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. She has instilled a common purpose and an effective team approach to the school's development. Staff, in particular senior staff, are committed and involved in accurate self-evaluation. Governors carry out their duties well. The inspection confirmed the school's view of how effective it is and there is a strong capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class and make good progress. This is because of the effective use of assessment information to track children's progress and the good planning of challenging learning activities. For example, analysis of assessment data indicated the need to focus on children's understanding of the sounds of letters and words. A recent focus on those sounds is helping children to improve their rate of progress in communication, language and literacy. The attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is what is typical for children of their age. When they enter Year 1 most are working at the levels expected and many beyond the expected levels. Children are well behaved, showing good attitudes towards each other and towards the adults who care for them. Due to the interesting nature and variety of the activities provided for them, they show well developed concentration skills and perseverance, working independently when required. Teaching and learning are consistently good and the Foundation Stage is well led and managed. The children are provided with a wide range of challenging and enjoyable activities both inside and outside the classroom. They are well cared for. Strengths and areas to develop are known well and a detailed action plan for improvement is in place. This has identified the right areas for improvement and it is successfully moving the Foundation Stage forward.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils use their good writing skills well in all subjects of the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above those normally found and achievement is good. Over the last three years standards at the end of Year 2 have been well above those found nationally. In the 2007, Year 6 national tests, standards were a little lower than previous years in English and mathematics. The school recognised that more able pupils in particular did not make as much progress as they should. As a result, strategies have been put in place to address this issue. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that standards are above expected levels in English, mathematics and science. However, the good quality of pupils' writing in their literacy lessons is not reflected in the quality of their writing in most other subjects. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to others because they receive good support tailored to their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's Christian ethos ensures every child really does matter. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is particularly strong. Pupils are reflective about their learning and they act responsibly and with consideration for one another. They are confident in discussions and understand that racism and bullying are unacceptable. They have an excellent understanding of their own culture and the culture of others. Their behaviour is often exemplary, which adds to the positive and happy atmosphere in the school. Pupils' enjoyment of school is illustrated in their good attendance, as one pupil said, 'I enjoy everything about school, lessons and activities are interesting and fun.' Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe and often make good choices when considering food and exercise. They have a very good

knowledge and understanding of healthy lifestyles. There are very strong links with the community, including the local church and local and international charities. Pupils are well prepared for their future through high standards in basic skills and their personal development is exceptional.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching is the major reason for pupils' good achievement. Very good relationships ensure that pupils are confident to participate in all activities. Teachers plan lessons well and provide tasks that interest, challenge and support pupils. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond well. Members of staff skilfully work together and ensure everyone, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve well. Teachers' marking congratulates pupils on their accomplishments and is usually helpful to pupils. Occasionally, it does not correct work that is presently badly. At times, too much teacher talk means that not enough time is provided for pupils to finish planned activities. The grouping of younger pupils according to their ability in lessons to develop their early reading skills is proving to be effective. A key factor in the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is the skilled support from the teaching assistants

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A well planned curriculum supports pupils' good academic progress. Pupils' outstanding personal skills owe much to an excellent programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils enjoy a wide range of learning experiences, particularly the opportunities presented during themed weeks, for example the recent 'America' week. Many visits and visitors enrich learning as evidenced during the inspection where one class of younger pupils travelled by train to Manchester Museum to enrich their work related to dinosaurs. Pupils' differing needs are well met. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good support. Basic skills are developed well in literacy and numeracy lessons. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their good writing skills in other subjects. Pupils develop a good range of information and communication technology (ICT) skills. A very good range of activities outside lessons enable pupils to pursue their interests in areas such as sport, drama and languages. Older pupils enjoy their role in leading play activities with younger pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school values each child as an individual and follows their progress carefully. A successful process of rigorous assessments and thorough reviews of progress are coupled with teachers' personal knowledge of each child to identify where help is needed. Pupils understand what they have achieved and what they need to do next and this is helping to accelerate their progress. Very clear procedures safeguard the welfare of pupils and meet current government requirements. They ensure that child protection, health and safety, and risk assessments for activities are secure and up-to-date. Extremely close links with external agencies enable staff to offer well informed guidance, especially to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There have been good improvements since the previous inspection, especially with regard to standards in mathematics. The school's growing popularity is reflected in the fact that there are now forty more pupils attending the school. The head teacher's leadership is outstanding and she has developed a leadership team, which is supporting well the drive to raise standards. She has guided the school well and has remained clearly focused on the interests and education of the pupils in her care. The school evaluates itself well and the leadership team and other leaders in the school have identified areas for development and drawn up and implemented plans designed clearly to promote improvement. The impact on pupils' progress is clear although more can be done to offer opportunities for writing in subjects such as geography and history. School governors are very supportive of the school and have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The school has a very good relationship with parents, who are very supportive, and is highly regarded in the local community. The school has developed many good links with other schools for the benefit of all the pupils involved. It is well resourced and the headteacher and governors work well together to face the challenges posed by a growing school roll. The school provides good value for money.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	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	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?	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?	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	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	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

10 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Appley Bridge All Saints Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, WN6 9DT

I am writing to you to thank you for your help during my visit to your school and to share with you my opinions about it. I agree with the school that it is a good one that provides you with a good standard of education. I was very impressed by how friendly and polite you are, not just with me, but most importantly with each other. You behave very well and you work hard and try your best in lessons. I enjoyed seeing you and your parents celebrating National Book Week (and eating the toast). I only wish I had remembered to dress up in an American costume!

The younger children in the Foundation Stage get a great start to school life. Throughout the rest of the school you achieve well in English and mathematics. It was good to see you produce some good writing in literacy lessons but I was a little disappointed that sometimes I did not find the same quality of writing in other subjects. The school will be working with you to try and improve this aspect of your education.

I agree with you that your headteacher and teachers are very caring and help you very much if you have a problem or personal issue. All the jobs you do in school and the many committees pupils are involved in are certainly helping you to become good citizens of the future. It is good to see that many of you know what you need to do to be safe and keep healthy and fit.

Your school provides all of you with very caring place to learn. You are given lots of help by teachers and teaching assistants and you therefore feel safe and secure at all times.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and wish you the very best for your future.

Yours truly

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector