

Ellel St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 119527 |
| Local Authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 313325 |
| Inspection date | 20 September 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Lynne Read |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 177 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Stephen Booth |
| Headteacher | Mrs Barbara White |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2003 |
| School address | Chapel Street Galgate Lancaster Lancashire LA2 0JS |
| Telephone number | 01524 751320 |
| Fax number | 01524 751917 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. Pupils come from mixed backgrounds; the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is below average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. When they enter the Reception class, children's development is broadly typical for the age group. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average overall, with an average percentage having a statement of special educational needs. Breakfast and after-school clubs are held daily on the premises and are run by a committee.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; personal development and well-being; enhancement of the curriculum; care, guidance and support; and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self evaluation document, national published assessment data, the school's records and procedures, lesson observations, a scrutiny of pupils' past work, assessment data, parents' replies to the questionnaire and discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated 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.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. There are some outstanding features which include pupils' personal development and the quality of care, guidance and support provided for them. The school provides good value for money. The inspection judgements match the school's own evaluation of its performance, confirming the effectiveness of its monitoring and self-evaluation procedures. Managers continually identify areas for improvement and develop the relevant plans for action. Because of this effective system, the school has a record of good improvements made since the previous inspection and has good capacity to maintain its strengths and improve further. The vast majority of parents have very positive views of the school. Comments received include praise for 'the teaching and nurturing of the children', 'the pleasant, well-ordered and welcoming atmosphere' and 'great communications'.

Standards are above average and pupils achieve well. On entry to Year 1, pupils' attainment is mostly typical for their age with strengths in personal and early reading skills. They make good progress through Key Stage 1 and standards in the Year 2 teacher assessments are consistently above average. By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are generally well above average. A slight dip in 2006 was due partly to the fact that this was a small year group which included a relatively high percentage of pupils with additional needs. In addition, a high percentage of pupils entered or left the year group so not all had the benefit of the school's good provision across the junior years. The other factor was attainment in science which was slightly lower than expected. Staff acted swiftly on this issue, making adjustments in the curriculum and teaching. Indications from the 2007 results show that attainment overall is high, with a good percentage of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in science. Reading is a strength throughout school. Teachers have focused on boosting writing skills to the same high level, with some improvements seen this year. There is still some work left to do however, in order to close the gap. Pupils who have additional needs make good progress from their starting points.

Pupils learn well because they are taught well. Pupils' work is constantly assessed and tasks are well planned to cater for pupils' differing abilities. The more able have good challenges to stretch them and good support is provided for pupils who need extra help. Where pupils' progress is not meeting the teachers' expectations, special catch-up or booster programmes are introduced and this is another factor underpinning good progress at the school. In lessons seen, pupils had reading material of good quality which provided a wealth of ideas and motivation for their writing. However, some reading books in school are old and do not provide enough stimulation for pupils' writing. Well trained teaching assistants make a significant contribution to learning. Through careful guidance and encouragement, they enable pupils to succeed. Teachers provide very good guidance for pupils through individual and group targets which show them how well they are doing and what needs improving. Older pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and develop targets themselves. As a result, they are developing excellent skills of independent learning. Similar systems are now being developed in the other age groups. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and support the homework programme well.

The good curriculum is another important factor underpinning good progress. It gives ample opportunities for pupils to apply what they learn in their literacy, numeracy and computer lessons. Lessons provide a good balance in developing pupils' creative, physical and emotional skills, as well as the academic. There is excellent enhancement for learning through visits and expert visitors, both of which inject excitement into the curriculum. Pupils especially appreciate

the ever-changing selection of out-of-school clubs which provides opportunities for them to try out new activities, such as fencing or golf.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding: it is supported very well by the school's religious ethos, strong links with the church and an excellent programme of personal, health, social and citizenship education. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and behave extremely well. Older pupils demonstrate very good self-discipline and a strong work ethic. Throughout school, pupils are happy and confident learners because they have excellent relationships with their teachers. Meticulous attention is given to care, support and safeguarding issues. As a result, pupils feel secure and say that teachers always 'listen and help'. The standard of provision for pupils who have a statement of special educational need is excellent. The staff go to great lengths to secure specialist equipment or advice to meet each pupil's needs fully. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and take very good advantage of the wide range of sporting and physical activities arranged. There is a strong community spirit in school with pupils collecting for charities, helping others and taking on responsibilities such as being class monitors and members of the school council. These activities prepare them well for future education and work.

There is no complacency in this school where leadership and management are good. Senior and subject managers constantly check on provision and learning, taking action where needed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is constantly driving the school forwards. She has the confidence and respect of staff, governors, parents and pupils. All staff work as a strong team, providing a continuity of approach throughout lessons and leisure time. The learning environment is stimulating; administration is very effective and standards of maintenance and cleanliness are very good. These factors reflect the shared sense of pride among all adults at the school and their commitment to providing the best for the pupils. Governors understand the strengths of the school thoroughly and have a broad overview of standards and achievement. They are taking an increasingly active and critical role in the process of monitoring the school's performance and know there is scope to develop their systems further. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the school with a very broad range of skills. Overall, their abilities are typical for the age group but the number of children who have additional needs or who are identified as gifted or talented varies widely between each year. Children make a good start to their education in the Reception class. By the end of the year, there are strengths in their personal, social and emotional development and in early reading skills. Children enjoy a wide range of teacher-led tasks, including physical challenges. Independent learning is supported well through an interesting selection of 'free choice' activities but children do not have continuous access to their outdoor learning area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in writing to match the very good ones in reading.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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|---|-----|
| 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 | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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| 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 | 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

21 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ellel St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, LA2 0JS

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. You made my visit enjoyable and gave me lots of help. In return, I would like to share my findings with you.

St John's is a very happy and friendly school; as one of you said, 'This is a caring school'. Your attitudes and behaviour are excellent, you work very hard and are making good progress. Well done. You are a credit to your school and families. You have interesting lessons and I agree fully with the person who said, 'There are lots of opportunities to do new and different things'.

The headteacher and staff go to great lengths to make sure you are safe and happy. You trust your teachers and that encourages you to try hard. Please thank your parents for sending lots of replies to the questionnaire. The vast majority are very pleased with what the school provides and the progress you make.

You have worked hard to improve your writing skills but there is still some more work to do to make your progress in this area as super as it is in reading. You have excellent attitudes to your learning, good concentration and you are prepared to persevere when tasks are difficult, so I'm sure you can do it!

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations I had and for letting me know your views so clearly. There is a great deal about your school of which you and the staff should be very proud.

Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector