

Scotforth St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119533
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313328
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Howard Roberts
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Aylott
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2003
School address	Scotforth Road Lancaster Lancashire LA1 4SE
Telephone number	01524 65379
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Scotforth St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided School is an average sized primary school, south of the city of Lancaster, close to two universities. Currently, the school is undergoing significant building and remodelling work. Most pupils are White British. The number pupils who take a free school meal is well below the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is broadly average and the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is more than double the national average. A higher than average proportion of pupils come from homes where an adult has higher education. The school has very close links with the church and has gained several awards including Investors in People, ActiveMark, SportsMark, National Healthy School Award, Eco School silver award and the Basic Skills quality mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Scotforth St Paul's is a good school. It has some outstanding features, notably in the very high quality of pastoral care that results in pupils' outstanding personal development. Most parents are supportive of the school and value what it offers. A view of many parents was expressed by one in 'The school has an excellent ethos and the Christian values adopted have made this school desirable for local parents, even those with no faith themselves'.

A strong Christian ethos runs through the school and is evident in the relationships that exist between all members of the school community. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and, because of the guidance provided by the school, pupils take on responsibility with increasing maturity.

The headteacher provides good leadership and despite staff changes and building works, the school has moved forward rapidly on several fronts. Because of staff changes, many teachers have new subject leadership responsibilities and are enthusiastic about developing these roles. Their impact in these roles on improved performance by pupils is yet to be seen. The governing body provides outstanding challenge and support. Governors use their particular professional expertise very effectively.

Pupils make good progress. Children start in Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly in line with those typical for their age. Their early numeracy skills are above average for their age. Children make good progress in Reception and develop very good social and emotional skills. This is because of the good teaching and the very good care, guidance and support. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 and leave school with standards that are high. Teaching and learning are good overall. However, in some lessons there are too many missed opportunities for the most able pupils to develop their skills and knowledge to the full.

The good curriculum means that most pupils enjoy their work and learn in relevant and interesting ways. The outstanding range of extra activities support and enrich the curriculum. Visitors and educational visits are used very effectively to interest pupils in their learning. While most pupils' learning needs are catered for fully, activities sometimes lack challenge for the most able pupils.

There are some very good examples of academic guidance where teachers use sharp questioning, well placed individual targets and specific advice for improvement very well. These strategies, however, are not consistently applied in all classes and pupils do not always fully understand how they can improve their work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress in all areas of their learning. They settle into school routines quickly and work well together because of the very good guidance provided by the teacher and teaching assistants. Relationships between adults and children in the Reception class are a key strength of this provision. Adults know the children very well and children feel safe and confident in their care. Behaviour is very good. Children quickly learn how to get along together and adults support and encourage this.

There is a good balance between whole-class teaching and independent play-based learning. Independent activities are well planned to support the development of skills. Many opportunities

are provided for children to practise new skills in fun ways. At the end of Reception, children are ready to move onto Key Stage 1 with many doing well when compared to children of their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide effective guidance for improvement for all pupils.
- Ensure that all teaching engages and motivates all learners, especially the most able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in all key stages and reach high standards by the end of Key Stage 2.

Children start Reception with skills and knowledge typical for their age, except in their early mathematical skills which are above expectations. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to reach standards, at the end of Year 2, which are above average in English and well above in mathematics.

In 2007, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. This is an improvement on the previous two years when standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were broadly average. Pupils in Year 6 are currently on target to meet ambitious targets that, if realised, would constitute good progress and high standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thrive in a positive atmosphere in which they feel valued, safe, listened to and encouraged. Relationships are excellent and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding. Pupils move around the school calmly and sensibly. Pupils know exactly how to conduct themselves and do so because it is the right thing to do.

Pupils' views are taken into account. They appreciate the opportunities provided for their views to be listened to. There are many opportunities for pupils to take positions of responsibility. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and demonstrate a very good level of commitment to these roles.

Pupils have a very good sense of danger and know how to stay safe. They assess risk in class and on the playground and behave in an impeccable fashion. Pupils say that they understand how to stay safe outside school.

Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They make healthy choices by taking part in regular physical activities and choosing a balanced diet at lunch time. Pupils' basic skills and ICT are developed well. Pupils make good decisions and accept the views and opinions of others. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Moral and spiritual development is outstanding. A strong Christian ethos permeates the school. Pupils understand key moral and spiritual messages in assemblies and contribute their own ideas and suggestions willingly.

Cultural development is outstanding. Pupils understand and appreciate the impact of significant figures in history and, with increasing maturity, recognise their ability to make a difference in the world. Pupils recognise the importance of their culture, their locality and its history. Pupils take part in many local projects and festivals, such as work with local artists and events to commemorate the abolition of the slave trade.

Pupils develop a good understanding of other cultures and enjoy learning about young people from different parts of the world. For example, through a pairing project, they forge strong links with pupils from a school in Uganda. This enables pupils from both schools to learn from and about each other.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In typical lessons activities are designed to capture pupils' imagination. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning and join in enthusiastically. Classrooms are welcoming and well organised. Bright, stimulating displays are used well to celebrate pupils' work and to reinforce learning. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and provide very good levels of support for individuals and groups of pupils. Most lessons are matched well to the full range of learners' needs and abilities but, in some lessons, work is less well matched for more able pupils who, as a result, do not make the progress they could. Marking typically provides praise but does not always offer relevant advice on how pupils can improve further. In the outstanding lessons seen, pupils were engrossed in lessons while being continuously challenged through high quality questions and accurate guidance for improvement. In these lessons all pupils made rapid progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is very well enriched with an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy learning because of the exciting and relevant opportunities available through the curriculum. Educational visits and visitors to school provide very good first-hand experiences and add additional interest. Pupils develop a wide range of skills. Opportunities are available for them to solve problems, debate and work collaboratively throughout the school. Pupils and parents appreciate the wide range of extra activities available in school. Activities are well designed to meet the needs of most individuals and groups within school. For example, a club has been set up for pupils who benefit from additional support in school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The way that this school provides pastoral care is outstanding. All staff work well together to make sure that pupils are extremely well cared for and feel safe. All child protection, safeguarding and risk assessment procedures are in place. The school has good links with external agencies to provide specialist support for pupils with complex needs. For example, early identification and very good support for pupils with LDD ensures that their needs are met and that they make good progress. Healthy lifestyles are promoted well and pupils make good choices, knowing the importance of exercise and a balanced diet. Parents are welcomed into the school and some

make a strong contribution to school life by supporting class teachers and through the work of the school's Friends' Association.

Marking in books provides praise and support but is inconsistent in the guidance it offers pupils in how they can improve. Some pupils know they have learning targets but only a minority know what they are and what they can do to improve. As a result, marking and academic guidance does not always help pupils know what they need to do next.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides very good direction for improving the quality of education and care. Resources are well deployed to ensure that good standards are reached and pupils' personal development is outstanding.

Many teachers have recently taken on new responsibilities for subject leadership. Subject leaders are at different levels of development in terms of understanding their roles and developing the skills to rigorously drive school improvement.

Governance is outstanding. The governing body support the school very well. Individually governors know aspects of the school's work very well. Collectively, they have an excellent picture of the school's strengths, areas for developments and priorities. This shared intelligence is used to provide outstanding support along with well placed challenge.

Most parents are positive about the work of the school. However, a small minority have expressed concern about the quality of leadership and the way that the school takes account of their views. Inspectors found no evidence to substantiate this.

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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	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	2
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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	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

12 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Scotforth St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, LA1 4SE

As you know, I visited your school, along with Doug Lowes, to see how well your school is doing. Thank you for making us so welcome and talking with us about your school so freely. This letter is to let you know what we found out.

Many of you were keen to tell us about how good your school is and we agree with you. Your school is a good school. In fact, your school is outstanding in the way that it helps you develop as young people and how it cares and supports you.

It was good to see so many of you enjoying music. Your clarinets and singing sounded wonderful. We found that this was one example of the many activities that you take part in.

We found that you are taught well and that most of you are learning quickly. However, we thought that some of you who find learning easy could have work that you would find more challenging. We have asked your teachers to look at your work to make sure you all need to think really hard in lessons.

We also found that most of your teachers tell you what you need to improve on by giving you comments in your books and giving you targets. Your school is right to develop this area and we have asked them to give you suggestions on how to improve and time so you can have a go at making your work better straight away.

I have to finish by saying that we found your behaviour to be outstanding. You are all a real credit to your school and to your parents. It was a real pleasure to meet you all.

I wish you all the very best of luck.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan

Lead inspector