

Skerton St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119534
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313329
Inspection date	19 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Straw

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	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Ralston
Headteacher	Mrs Jennifer Moore
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Slyne Road Lancaster Lancashire LA1 2JH
Telephone number	01524 65445
Fax number	01524 843951

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	19 October 2007
Inspection number	313329

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether all pupils achieve as well as they can in writing, why the school is achieving so well in science, the quality of teaching and whether the school is effective in identifying areas for further improvement. Evidence was gathered from discussions with the headteacher, members of staff and governor representatives. In addition several parts of lessons were observed; school information and its self-evaluation documentation were scrutinised, samples of pupils' work and parent questionnaires were considered and discussions took place with pupils. Other aspects of the schools' 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. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is just outside the city centre of Lancaster in an area of some economic disadvantage. The school is slightly smaller than average and the proportion of pupils entitled to claim a free school meal is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and none are at an early stage in learning English. In most year groups there are a few pupils from Traveller backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and more than double the national average for pupils with a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school and some aspects of its work are outstanding. The success of St Luke's is founded upon the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the high expectations set for everyone and the excellent care provided for pupils. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to school, they achieve well to reach consistently above average standards and make good progress in their personal development. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school, summed up by one parent who described it as, 'A good, safe, productive learning environment.' Links with the local church are strong and the ethos of the school reflects its Christian values. The pupils are proud of their school and their achievements.

Standards have been above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 for several years and pupils of all abilities achieve well. This includes pupils with a statement of special educational need. Standards have been consistently above average at the end of Year 2, representing good achievement. Early indications indicate a slight dip in standards overall for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2007: many of this group had learning difficulties and disabilities, but given their starting point, most of these pupils achieved well. In Key Stage 2, standards are above average. Achievement in science is outstanding. The science results gained by pupils in Year 6 in 2006 put them in the top 2% nationally. This is because pupils have lots of opportunities to plan and conduct their own investigations. Achievement is very good in mathematics and good in English, although pupils make better progress in reading than in writing.

The school has high aspirations for all its pupils and staff. Teaching is good overall and the staff make learning fun. Good teaching is characterised by very good planning, activities that are well matched to the needs of individual pupils, frequent and effective assessment, learning targets for every pupil and well informed teaching assistants who contribute strongly to the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Clear, effective planning in science ensures pupils have a wide range of opportunities to discover the world around them through well-focused practical activities. There are numerous opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) and older pupils are encouraged to develop a more investigative approach. Where teaching is less successful it is because it is too teacher-led and work is less appropriate for all the pupils in the class. The school takes excellent care of its pupils. There is a long-standing commitment to Traveller children's education and data shows that these children achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because of the expertise of high quality support staff and the very perceptive and accurate individual education plans which are designed for them. The school has rigorous procedures to ensure the safety of pupils at all times.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their enjoyment of school and believe they receive a good education. Attendance is above average. All pupils feel safe in school and know there is an adult to whom they can turn if worried or in difficulties. They understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle and make good choices in deciding on healthy snacks at break and lunchtime and ensuring they keep fit and active. Older pupils show a good sense of responsibility by helping the teachers and younger children, being playground buddies and play leaders. The school council is active and efficient and knows that the school listens to its members' views. Currently they are engaged in helping to design new areas of the playground. St Luke's is a generous school and raises money for many charities. Pupils are well prepared

for the next stage of education and beyond because they are articulate, very competent in basic literacy, numeracy and ICT and independent learners.

The experienced and highly caring headteacher provides outstanding leadership in many areas such as promoting high academic standards and ensuring that pupils receive excellent care, guidance and support. She has fostered a climate for learning in which everyone tries to achieve their best. Targets are set for all pupils and for all staff. Curriculum leaders are rigorous in their management of subject areas and make themselves accountable for standards and achievement across the school. This team has ensured that consistently high standards have been maintained over the last few years. Self-evaluation is strong, but with a tendency for the school to be too modest in a few aspects of its own assessments. The school rigorously monitors all aspects of its performance and works quickly to address areas of comparative weakness. Governors support the school well, striking a good balance between asking searching questions to challenge the school and offering total support. Because of the strong and collaborative leadership the school is well placed to improve further and gives good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in Reception is good. Children enter the school with skills which are below those expected for their ages especially in the areas of communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. The schools' key strategy is to focus on practical activities to develop children's speaking and listening skills and vocabulary acquisition. As a result, children settle quickly and make rapid progress. Very effective planning, good teaching and learning and very good leadership ensure that most children achieve well and reach the early learning goals set for them. Children learn in a spacious and stimulating environment with plenty of opportunities to use the outdoor classroom areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing to match those achieved on reading, mathematics and science.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
--	-----------------------

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?	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	2
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?	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	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Skerton St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Lancashire,
LA1 2JH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited you in school last week. I enjoyed seeing you at work and meeting and talking to so many of you. I have used some of the things you told me to write this report.

These are the things I really liked about your school.

- The happy atmosphere in the school and way you all help each other.
- The way teachers make lessons interesting and enjoyable most of the time so that you learn well.
- The good results you gain at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The outstanding results you gain in science.
- The interesting subjects you do and all the exciting clubs and events after school.
- The way in which the school takes excellent care of you so that you all feel safe, happy and secure.
- The way all the adults in school work so well together to help you to achieve the best that you can.

To try to make the school even better your teachers are going to make sure that progress in writing is good across all classes. You can help here by working hard on your writing, whether it is in literacy or in other subjects.

Good luck in the future: you are right to be proud of your school.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw

Inspector