

Slyne-with-Hest, St Luke's, Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119542
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313331
Inspection date	28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Dave Byrne

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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Bateson
Headteacher	Mr Paul Bowden
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Shady Lane Slyne-with-Hest Lancaster Lancashire LA2 6JL
Telephone number	01524 823505
Fax number	01524 824897

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' progress in Key Stage 2; the quality of teaching and learning in all parts of the school; the effectiveness of the senior staff in monitoring the school's performance, and use of realistic but challenging targets to raise achievement.

Evidence was gathered from the school's performance data and other school documentation including the school's self-evaluation, observations of teaching and learning, samples of work produced by pupils (including how pupils interact with each other and their response to what is provided for them), parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils and staff and the school's improvement partner. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. The inspector found that almost all of the judgements made in the school's self-evaluation form were justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British background and no pupils require support for English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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 in which academic standards are exceptionally high and pupils' achievement is excellent. Pupils reach outstanding levels of personal development and well-being, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The inspirational leadership of the headteacher is a key factor in the school's success. He works tirelessly to provide pupils with the best possible quality of care and guidance and the highest quality of teaching. Parents are very satisfied with the school, many of whom feel it is better now than it was at the time of the last inspection. The comment of one parent typifies the views expressed by the vast majority, 'I couldn't be happier with my child's progress and the way in which the school enriches my child's life.' The school values the strong support of parents, which is an important factor in the pupils' good attendance rates and in their excellent progress.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are above those typical for their age, and receive an excellent start to their education. It is here that children acquire very good levels of personal, social and emotional development and develop a love of learning. Excellent planning and management enables pupils in the Foundation Stage to move seamlessly into Key Stage 1, thereby maintaining the excellent progress. In Years 1 and 2 outstanding teaching makes learning fun. As a result, many pupils reach extremely high standards in many subjects by the end of Year 2. During an excellent Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils discussed the issues for public health arising from the work of Florence Nightingale during the Crimea war. The test results in reading, writing and mathematics are very high and have been well above average over the last five years.

In Key Stage 2, the rate of progress has improved significantly over the last twelve months and is now excellent. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 has been improved and is now very good, with some exemplary teaching in Year 6. The school very successfully meets the high demands of the pupils, most of whom are very able. Test results in English, mathematics and science have been above average every year since 2003, although in 2007 they dipped to average in science due to unavoidable staffing difficulties. The school has taken decisive action to raise achievement this year and is confidently predicting that Year 6 pupils will reach the very high targets set for English, mathematics and science. Very effective support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils also do very well. Pupils also make very good progress in information and communication technology, history, sport and aspects of music.

Pupils love learning and enter into everything with great enthusiasm, be it participating in the school band, taking on responsibility as 'buddies' organising playtimes, and helping others. In lessons pupils work very hard and are proud of their work. Their behaviour is excellent. At all times, pupils are caring and considerate and treat everyone with respect. They say they feel safe in school and that bullying or harassment is rare and they are confident that it is dealt with swiftly, should it happen. The school's involvement in the Local Authority Healthy schools initiative and the acquisition of the Activemark award reflects the pupils' good knowledge and understanding of how to keep fit, healthy and safe. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their future lives.

The curriculum is in the process of being remodelled but it already has many strengths. Some recent and innovative improvements to the planning of subjects have increased opportunities for pupils to apply their advanced skills of both literacy and ICT to new and varied circumstances.

This is helping pupils to reach their full potential in these subjects. The revisions to the curriculum have increased the pupils' desire to learn because lessons are more relevant to their own lives. Very close links with other schools, including secondary schools, adds to pupils' learning experiences. They enable the exploration of a wide range of sports that include not only traditional team games, but also events such as fencing and golf. The links with secondary school also enable pupils to learn French. Pupils take part in a number of events involving the school choir and band. Although pupils willingly and capably take responsibility in many aspects of school life, their full potential for acting independently and influencing aspects of its day-to-day running is relatively underdeveloped.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher and senior management team are relatively new and have successfully maintained the school's previous strengths, whilst developing and improving some areas further. Very effective systems ensure that the school is accurate in evaluating itself. Everyone involved in the school from pupils to staff, and from governors to parents, is consulted. As a result, relevant priorities for the school's development are established. The school has high ambitions for its pupils. Academic targets have been raised to a very high level this year. These set the standard towards which staff aim and, in the process, remove underachievement. Governors make sure that the school meets all statutory requirements. Particular attention is given to implementing the correct procedures for safeguarding pupils and maintaining their health and safety. Finances are carefully managed to get the best possible value for money. The school is well resourced, efficiently staffed and the accommodation is of a high quality, although it is rather cramped in parts. Pupils benefit from excellent outdoor learning and play facilities. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and has excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. It is exceptionally well led and managed and ensures that children receive the best possible teaching. In their time in Reception, the children's advanced skills, which are their typical starting points, are successfully extended. This is because they are given exciting and exceptionally well planned activities that capture their imaginations and build up not only their academic skills, but also their personal, social and emotional development. When they start Year 1, the large majority of children exceed expectations for their age. Relationships with parents are excellent. They value the safe and secure environment within which their children are educated.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the curriculum further so that pupils reach their full potential in terms of acting independently and taking responsibility for, and influencing, aspects of school life.

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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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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?	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?	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	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

29 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Slyne-with-Hest, St Luke's, Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, LA2 6JL

It was a pleasure to visit your school to see how effective it is. I appreciate the welcome you gave me and the polite way that you shared your thoughts and ideas with me during lessons, over lunch and also during meetings. Please thank your parents on my behalf for sending me their questionnaires, and for taking the time to give me their views.

Your school is outstanding. It is doing its very best to make sure that each of you does as well as you can in subjects and also in the way you behave. Your behaviour is exemplary, and you work extremely hard in lessons. I was impressed by your willingness to help each other and take on jobs. I do feel, though, that you could have even more opportunities to act independently and to accept responsibility for tasks that help with the day-to-day running of your school. I have asked the school to work with you to find ways of doing this. It is good to see that you value the importance of eating healthily, taking exercise and in avoiding harmful things such as drugs and alcohol. If you act on your good understanding of these important things, it will help you to be healthy and happy in future.

The school is very caring and keeps you safe. Your teachers are excellent and work hard to give you exciting lessons that interest you. Many extra things are provided such as sports, taking part in the choir and learning French and this makes school life even more interesting. You all do very well in English, mathematics, science and ICT, and have strengths in history, sport and aspects of music.

At the heart of the school is your headteacher who is constantly working to give you the best possible quality of education. He, together with the teachers and support staff, makes sure that you are all very well prepared for your next stage of education.

I send you all my best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Dave Byrne

Lead inspector