

Samlesbury Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119572
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313345
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Jennie Platt

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	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev McCullough
Headteacher	Mr Nick Cornall
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2005
School address	Potter Lane Samlesbury Preston Lancashire PR5 0UE
Telephone number	01772 877200
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school and pupils are taught in three mixed age classes in the morning and two classes in the afternoon. It serves a wide area which includes pockets of social and economic deprivation but overall, the pupils' socio-economic circumstances are similar to the national picture. A lower than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. No pupil has 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 with excellent features in pupils' personal development and the care and guidance provided for them. These strengths make this a very happy and friendly place to learn. Pupils arrive smiling, even on a very wet day, and thoroughly enjoy school. Very good attention is given to guiding pupils about how to keep safe and healthy. As a result, they feel comfortable in school and confidently take advantage of all that is on offer. With good basic skills and high level of self-confidence the pupils are extremely well prepared for the future. Parents value the education their children receive. One parent sums up their appreciation as 'all the children seem happy and I am very proud that my child goes to this school.'

Teaching is consistently good and leads to good achievement. Pupils are well managed and lessons run smoothly. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to learning showing perceptive skills in responding to individual need. Numeracy is especially taught well with effective use of resources and a focus on learning through practical activities. When they start school children have skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They make good progress throughout the school and leave exceeding the expected level. The results of teachers' assessments and national tests vary year on year because of the very small number of pupils involved. Looking at results over recent years it is clear that at the end of Year 2 standards are above average in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing are average because teachers do not always provide enough challenge for the higher attaining pupils to fully extend their existing skills. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is consistently good with some excellent features. Pupils make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 6 are consistently above average and the most recent results showed English was significantly above average, reflecting the increasing number of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age.

The low number of pupils is used to good advantage in the pastoral care of the pupils which is excellent. Everyone knows and cares for each other and clearly understand they have a role to play in making this a happy community. Older pupils keep a watchful eye on the younger children at play and throughout the day. This caring ethos leads to pupils feeling comfortable and having a real enthusiasm for school. This is evident in their keen participation in a wide variety of clubs and activities. These activities are an important part of the school's good curriculum. The school has sustained a good balance between academic and creative activities with a real strength in music and drama. Information and communication technology (ICT) is fully exploited and contributes to pupils' enthusiasm for learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an excellent leader successfully combining a teaching role with his management duties. His constant presence serves as a good role model for all as well as giving him a very clear picture of the school. Management responsibilities are shared between staff who contribute to setting the school's priorities. Governors, although supportive, do not play a full role in identifying and setting targets for school improvement. Nevertheless, all are involved in the school's self-evaluation which shows an accurate picture of what is working well and what needs attention. As a result, the school has improved well since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. The school is very caring and supportive of the children and make sure they are safe and secure at all times. The very low numbers make assessment data unreliable but individual records show that children make good progress. Most reach and a few exceed the level expected for their age by the end of the Reception class. In personal and social skills children benefit from mixing with older pupils and reach higher standards than expected for their age by the start of Year 1. Parents support their children's reading and feel able to visit school if they have any concerns. Warm relationships enable children to settle in happily. Teaching is good with good attention to developing children's early literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is satisfactory. Although activities are carefully matched to the recommended areas of learning, too many activities are led by staff. This reduces opportunities for children to develop the confidence to make decisions and take actions for themselves. The small classroom is a barrier to the promotion of a fully creative curriculum that provides opportunities for play and independent learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more challenging writing activities for the more able pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Provide more opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to make their own choices and decisions.
- Include governors more in the setting of the school's priorities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Children start school with a variety of skills and abilities but overall these are typical for their age. However, they do vary widely and are affected by age and gender. The school's records of individual progress show children do well and by the end of Reception reach the level expected for their age with many children exceeding this level especially in their personal skills.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 show standards in reading and mathematics are above average. Looking at assessments over several years writing is closer to average because of a lack of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. These pupils are not making enough progress. Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 show standards are above average. In previous years writing was a concern in Key Stage 2. With improved tracking and more sharing with pupils about what is expected of their work, standards have risen and in 2007 results were significantly above average.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. At the time of the inspection no pupils had a statement of special educational need. However, past records point to these pupils having made extremely good progress to overcome some major barriers to their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their attitudes and behaviour in classes, and around the school, are excellent. Attendance is well above average and is a signal of pupils' real enjoyment in school. Pupils willingly accept responsibility for small tasks. They

make an excellent contribution to the school community. It is a delight to see pupils of all ages playing happily together. Pupils also support the wider community raising money for charities. Healthy School status has been achieved by the school reflecting the school's determination to encourage pupils to live healthy lifestyles. Pupils recall the important safety messages provided by visitors, such as the fire service and drama groups and say they know how to keep themselves safe and secure.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Assemblies include wonderful singing which creates a feeling of fellowship and sharing. Through lessons and visits pupils gain a growing understanding of their own and world cultures. They respect each other and recognise that their actions can upset others. This leads to polite and courteous pupils who grow in self-confidence. This is very evident in their enthusiasm for the school drama productions. These are skilfully written by the headteacher so that all older pupils have a key part and they all are eager to perform. Although pupils express some anxiety about moving on to the next stage of their education they feel the staff have supported them very well. This is certainly true and their good basic skills and growing maturity mean they are exceptionally well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and as a result, pupils achieve well. Lessons are enjoyable because they include a good variety of activities that sustain pupils' interest. This is especially the case in numeracy lessons which go at a brisk pace with quick fire questions that challenge pupils' ability to carry out calculations mentally. Excellent teaching was seen for the oldest pupils with a real strength in drawing out from pupils their methods of problem solving. Literacy lessons in Key Stage 1 are not as exciting and tasks do not sufficiently challenge the writing skills of more able pupils'. Throughout the school teachers manage pupils well and often include humour. This not only allows lessons to run smoothly but also encourages pupils to contribute as is evident by the good show of hands to answer teachers' questions.

Marking is especially effective in Key Stage 2 where pupils have lists of what is expected for the piece of work or topic being covered. They appreciate this method and one pupil said 'they make us think about our work and show us how to improve'. This process is developing in Key Stage 1.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Careful planning enables the staff to provide a curriculum that matches the different ages and abilities in their class. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well provided for with careful assessment of their needs and sensitive support. The children in the Foundation Stage experience all of the recommended activities but they do not always have enough opportunity to work independently on purposeful activities. The small room restricts the development of a fully creative curriculum to meet the youngest children's needs.

Personal and social skills are provided for well in specific lessons but more so in other subjects and activities which enable pupils to extend their social skills in purposeful activities like team

building and drama. The displays of high quality art and focus on music show a good balance between the creative and academic curriculum. Close links with other agencies and sporting clubs, including Blackburn Rovers Football Club, enable the school to overcome some of the shortcomings to the physical education curriculum caused by the accommodation. School clubs, visits and visitors make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The excellent attention given to pupils' welfare enables pupils to benefit from lessons. All procedures to safeguard pupils are in place. The strength in the care provided is the staff's knowledge and genuine concern for their pupils. Pupils mirror this concern in their own actions. Older ones see it as their role 'to look out for the younger ones'. Parents appreciate the twinning of an older pupil with a new entrant which enables their children to settle happily.

Meticulous tracking of pupils' academic progress enables the school to spot any underachievement and respond swiftly. For example, additional teaching support is provided for intensive support for reading and writing and this accelerates pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The school is held in high esteem by parents and the local community. The headteacher is an excellent leader of the school. He leads by example being an effective teacher who promotes an enjoyment of learning. This is clear in the richness of experiences provided for pupils as well as the sharp focus given to raising standards.

The small number of staff means most management decisions are the fruit of regular staff discussions. Although informal, this system is effective and leads to a positive approach to change. Effective monitoring of the school's performance leads to the setting of realistic targets based upon a good understanding of the areas needing attention.

Governors are committed to providing the best for the school especially in the proposed building extension which is much needed. In other aspects they tend to rely on the headteacher for information rather than being involved in the initial process of setting priorities. Nevertheless, they do play an important role in challenging the school and in evaluating the school's progress to meeting targets.

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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	1
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	1

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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

17 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Samlesbury Church of England School, Lancashire, PR5 0UE

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit and am very grateful for your willingness to chat to me. This has helped me to write this report.

Your parents are correct that you go to a good school. Your teachers make lessons interesting and you make good progress. You contribute to this by your excellent attendance and enthusiasm for learning. Your manners and politeness are exemplary and you behave exceptionally well. I am pleased that you know how to keep safe and healthy and are confident that staff will help you if you have a problem.

Your school is now going to work on the following areas so that you can become even better:

- Check that pupils in Years 1 and 2 are always given work in writing that helps them to make good progress.
- Further develop the activities for children just starting school so that they can be even more interesting and expect more of them to make choices.
- Include more people when deciding what the school can do to get even better.

I enjoyed hearing about the fun you have performing in the school's excellent drama productions. I am sure memories of these very special occasions will just be a few of the happy events you will remember of your time at this school. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J E Platt

Lead inspector