

Trinity and St Michael's VA Church of England/Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131309
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	315777
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2008
Reporting inspector	George Crowther

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jim Rigby
Headteacher	Mrs Suzanne Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2004
School address	Out Lane Croston Leyland Lancashire PR26 9HJ
Telephone number	01772 600379
Fax number	01772 600133

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves an area whose social context is more favourable than most schools. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds and none is at the early stages of learning English. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, but includes a significant number who have a statement outlining their particular needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Trinity and St Michael's is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils achieve well academically and make outstanding gains in their personal skills. The school's strong Christian values create a very positive environment for learning where the success and well-being of each pupil is given the highest importance. The great majority of parents think very highly of the school. The headteacher is passionate about the pupils' learning. She is determined to enrich the quality of teaching and the curriculum to promote an even sharper focus on improving pupils' achievement. She has the wholehearted support of the staff and governors. As a result of these strengths, pupils achieve well; they are confident, articulate and thoroughly enjoy their time at school.

Children get a good start in the Reception class. Good teaching, stimulating activities and careful tracking of each child's progress lead to good achievement in all aspects of learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress. Lessons are interesting and the quality of teaching is usually good, which helps pupils to build their skills quickly. In Years 3 to 6, good teaching in most lessons helps pupils make good progress. Occasionally, however, teacher's expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and the pace of learning is too slow. Standards in the current Year 6 are significantly above average.

The pupils thoroughly enjoy school. In lessons, they are very keen to learn and they work hard. Their excellent behaviour supports their learning very effectively. Pupils work well together in class and they get on well together around the school. They have a good understanding of what they need to do to be healthy, and a very strong appreciation of dangers to their safety. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. Older pupils have many special responsibilities, which they take very seriously, and there are strong links with the local churches and the village. Pupils' good basic skills and their excellent personal qualities prepare them well for the future. The curriculum is broad and interesting, which helps pupils to enjoy their learning and achieve well in many subjects. Pastoral care is excellent and academic guidance is generally good, although the marking of pupils' work does not provide enough pointers as to how they can improve.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very positive leadership. She has a very clear vision for the development of the school, and has secured the enthusiastic support of the staff. Together, they are determined to improve aspects of the school's work, many of which are already strong, to ensure pupils learn the skills they will need in the future. Some of the action being taken, however, has not yet reached a point where leaders can fully evaluate its impact on pupils' achievement. Opportunities for staff to strengthen their skills are outstanding. Leaders have a coherent picture of the effectiveness of the school and know what needs to be done next, but some judgements are a little too positive. Overall, the school is in a good position to improve its work and it provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their ages and leave at levels above those expected. Good teaching and a very positive environment for learning help them to achieve well. Very effective arrangements for children starting school, with strong links to local nurseries, help them to settle quickly. High standards of care create

a happy and secure place for learning. The children learn quickly because activities are practical, interesting and enjoyable. Learning is a good balance between independent activities, such as matching up halves of coins, and adult-led activities like buying items in the sports' shop and trying them out in the hall. The staff encourage, support and enrich children's learning well. Although facilities indoors are good, the lack of a varied, covered outdoor area restricts the ways in which the staff can extend children's learning, particularly their physical development. The staff keep careful checks on children's progress and use the information well to plan what children need to learn next.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of lessons where teachers' high expectations and the pace of the work enable pupils to make rapid progress
- Ensure that marking of pupils' work helps them to understand how to improve

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children start school, their achievement is broadly typical for their ages. By Year 6, they have achieved well to reach standards that are significantly above average. This has led to the school receiving a Basic Skills Quality Mark. Children achieve well in the Reception class and, by the time they join Year 1 they have reached above expected levels. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress because most lessons build their basic skills systematically, and capitalise on the pupils' very keen attitudes to learning. Standards at the end of Year 2 have generally been significantly above average, but current standards are broadly average because the group has fewer higher attaining pupils than usual. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6 because good teaching helps them to learn quickly in most lessons. For 2007, measures of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 were very positive, and the current Year 6 has also achieved well. The few pupils with learning difficulties are fully involved in lessons and make good progress. More able pupils are challenged appropriately by the tasks they are given.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about school and very keen to be involved in lessons. By Year 6, they display mature and positive attitudes to learning. A typical comment was, 'Lessons are interesting and fun, but some of the work is hard and you really have to think'. Pupils' impeccable behaviour, always praised by the staff, contributes greatly to the pleasant atmosphere in school. Pupils are friendly, polite and keen to share their views. Relationships are excellent. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. Daily times for reflection, lots of opportunities to develop the skills of working together, and links with a school whose pupils have a very different cultural background, all give pupils a strong understanding of themselves and their place in the wider world. The pupils realise they must take care of themselves by eating the right things and taking regular exercise. This has led to a Healthy School Award. Pupils recognise dangers to their safety and know what to do if they feel unsafe. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community through many extra responsibilities and the articulate way in which they express their views. Well-developed academic skills and personal qualities equip them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn quickly in most lessons because they respond very positively to interesting work and good teaching. Teachers explain new ideas in a lively way and make activities fun, which encourages pupils' enthusiasm for learning. For example, Year 2 enjoyed a wide range of musical activities when they were learning about pitch. A strong focus on making clear to pupils what they will learn in a lesson makes tasks more purposeful. Teaching assistants do a good job in helping pupils, often those who find learning difficult, to make good progress. Where teaching is particularly good, the activities really capture the pupils' imagination. Rigorous systems for assessing pupils' skills and tracking their progress help teachers to plan appropriately challenging work in most lessons. The information also enables leaders to identify and tackle areas for improvement, such as older boys' writing skills. Occasionally, however, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough and progress and the pace of learning is too slow. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties is monitored thoroughly, which has contributed to the good gains made by many of these pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A broad, balanced and interesting curriculum meets the needs of the pupils effectively. For example, pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good support and a curriculum that is well matched to their needs. The curriculum for English, mathematics and science is strong, supporting pupils' achievement well, with a good emphasis on pupils learning skills through practical activities and investigations. The school is following a new curriculum model that focuses on the development of pupils' skills, rather than their knowledge of subjects. This is leading to some interesting work, but it is too early to judge its impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils' outstanding personal qualities owe much to a strong programme of personal and social education. The curriculum is enriched considerably by many visits and visitors. For example, joint activities with pupils from the adjacent high school help the older pupils to settle quickly when they transfer. The pupils thoroughly enjoy the good range of lunchtime and after school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral care and support for each child is outstanding and academic guidance is good. Parents and governors say the school's care for its children is a great strength. Staff work very hard to ensure that each child is safe, happy and ready to learn. The pupils recognise the quality of this care. A typical comment was 'The teachers are always there to help you if you have a problem'. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from particularly positive relationships with staff. Strong links with outside agencies ensure that pupils get all the help they need. Systems for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health, safety and well-being are in place and meet requirements. Teachers check on pupils' progress carefully and use the information well to identify and help those needing extra support or challenge. However, whilst teachers offer plenty of praise when they mark pupils' work, they do not always identify areas for improvement. Similarly, pupils are not always aware of their learning targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is a very strong and determined leader. She is determined to provide an education for the children that equips them with the skills they will need for the future. Accordingly, she has set a clear agenda to enrich teaching and the curriculum still further. Because the headteacher and deputy head have such a clear vision, she has been able to share it with all the staff successfully and create a united and committed team. The school has been awarded the Investors in People award for its work in staff development. Leaders already ensure that pupils develop outstanding personal qualities and they have a strong focus on sustaining high standards, illustrated by the 2007 Year 6 results. The school sets suitably challenging targets for pupils' achievement. Many staff are involved in leading and managing various aspects of the school's work and they carry out these responsibilities effectively. They identify and tackle aspects of the school's work that need to improve. For example, a concerted effort to improve the older boys' writing has been successful. Self-evaluation is detailed, but not always rigorous enough in identifying the impact of the school's work on pupils' achievement. Governors provide considerable support and have a good grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They ask challenging questions about the school's performance and have a strong focus on pupils' achievement.

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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	2
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	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	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

30 June 2008

Dear pupils

Inspection of Trinity and St Michael's VA CofE/Methodist Primary School, Lancashire, PR26 9HJ

Thank you for the friendly way you welcomed us to your school. Many of you were eager to tell us what you think about your school, which was very helpful in writing our report. Your school is a good school where you thoroughly enjoy your learning and make good progress.

When we talked to you and watched you working in lessons, it was clear you really enjoy being at school. You say you like lots of things about school, particularly the interesting work in lessons and the way the teachers help you to do well. We saw a good example when Year 5 had fun playing the role of a safety officer and giving a report about Albert's mishap with the lion. Your behaviour is excellent, in lessons, around the school and on the playground. When you chatted with us, you were friendly and polite, and you expressed your views confidently and articulately. You say everyone gets on very well together, which was very clear during our time in school. The older children say their favourite job is working with the younger ones, which shows you are keen to care for each other.

You learn quickly in most lessons because the work is interesting and the teaching is good. You say there are lots of interesting things to do at school, and we agree. The younger children enjoyed lots of interesting activities in the Safety Zone and we were impressed with the film-making skills of the Year 6 children. These activities add significantly to your enjoyment of school. The staff do an exceptional job in providing the care and support that helps you to do well at school. Your headteacher and the staff are doing a good job in helping your school to get better.

We have asked the staff to do two things to improve your learning:

- make sure that you learn quickly in all your lessons and get through all your work
- when they mark your work, give you a clear idea of how you can improve it in the future.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school.

Yours sincerely

George Crowther

Lead inspector