

Emmanuel Holcombe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105338
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	324205
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	100
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Macwilliam
Headteacher	Mr Tim Power
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Helmshore Road Holcombe Bury Lancashire BL8 4PA

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Inspection number	324205

Telephone number
Fax number

01706 823 498
01706 828 592

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most. Nearly all the pupils are of White British heritage. Very few are entitled to a free school meal and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much lower than usual. Each of the four classes caters for two age groups. The original school building has been altered and extended over time and stands on a sloping site that has a large number of steps.

The school holds a Healthy School Award, an Activemark 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

This is a good school where pupils love learning and their personal development is outstanding. Parents are very supportive; one comment illustrated their views, describing the school as, 'a safe, nurturing and happy place to be', and pupils really benefit from the very good relationship between home and school.

Children start school with the skills broadly typical for their age. They achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. Small cohorts of pupils make year to year comparisons difficult, but by the time pupils leave, standards are usually above average. However, there is some inconsistency in the progress of more able pupils in writing and mathematics.

Personal development is excellent. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to keep themselves healthy and are proud of their Healthy Schools Award. They say there is no problem with bullying and that staff help them negotiate with each other so any problems are quickly sorted out. Behaviour is excellent. In class, this impacts very strongly on learning, and ensures pupils move around the building and steps safely and carefully. Older pupils are very good role models for younger ones, particularly in the playground where they help as play leaders. Pupils have a strong community spirit and are eager to contribute to school, church and local events. Good academic standards and outstanding personal skills prepare them well for their future life.

Teaching is good so pupils really enjoy learning and work hard; one pupil spoke for them, saying, 'We get a good education and our lessons are exciting.' A good, balanced curriculum engages pupils in their learning so they achieve well. Pupils particularly relish the extra activities that bring the curriculum to life. Pastoral care is excellent; one parent described it as 'exceptional' and many parents spoke of the family ethos of the school. Consequently, pupils respond by carrying out responsibilities willingly and become thoughtful and mature young people who show high levels of care and consideration for others. Academic progress is tracked thoroughly and staff use the information to set targets for learning. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are beginning to understand what they need to do to achieve their individual targets, but the system is not fully established in other classes.

The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money. The headteacher provides strong direction, for example, in response to issues from the previous inspection. Subjects are led and managed well. The committed team of staff and governors build on links with the church and parents so the school is a harmonious learning community. The vision and skills of the leadership team mean the school is well placed for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Reception children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. Good induction procedures ensure they settle quickly because they feel safe, and parents are very pleased that their children are cared for so well. Children make excellent progress in their personal and social development. They rapidly gain self-confidence and independence, eagerly choosing activities and taking responsibility. They make good progress in the other areas of learning. Teaching is good, based on a well planned curriculum offering a good balance of play-based discovery activities both indoors and outside the classroom. Very occasionally, whole-class sessions last too long for these children who have only recently started school. Good speaking skills give the children a good basis for rapid progress in gaining early reading skills; they eagerly await the 'Super Sound

Sorter' puppet bringing them a new letter sound each day. Good leadership ensures the staff team thoroughly understand children's individual learning needs and monitor their progress rigorously to make sure they succeed in everything they do. By the time they move to Year 1, children reach and often exceed the learning goals for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the challenge for more able pupils so they consistently reach the higher levels in writing and mathematics.
- Further involve pupils in assessing their own work so that they understand what they must do to improve it.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Skilled support ensures all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning. Key Stage 1 pupils build on the good start made in the Reception class and reach standards that are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in Key Stage 2 is good overall and standards are usually above average. In writing and mathematics, pupils who attain the higher Level 3 in Year 2 do not always convert this to Level 5 at the end of Year 6. Although provisional results for Key Stage 2 in 2008 show every pupil gained the expected level in English, not all pupils met the targets for the higher levels in either English or mathematics. Pupils say they particularly enjoy science lessons; consequently, in 2007, every pupil gained the expected level, and pupils matched national results at the higher level. Early indications from school tracking information suggest that current Year 6 pupils are on course to meet their targets for 2009. Better use of data is providing a clearer picture of individual progress and of where extra support is needed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils show genuine enjoyment in learning, respect the world around them and demonstrate a real sense of pride in their school. Keen participation in sports and physical activities and awareness of healthy eating shows their excellent understanding of health issues. They are very caring and considerate towards others and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and their parents agree. Attendance is well above average, underlining how much pupils and their parents enjoy and value school. Older pupils eagerly take on responsibilities in the school community, for example, as play leaders or maintaining the laptops. The school councillors proudly report that through their efforts, a healthy fresh fruit tuck shop opens each day. Pupils have opportunities to organise fund-raising events for local and national charities. Pupils appreciate the links with local schools, including a nearby college for pupils of a different faith and cultural background, and are looking forward to their teacher's imminent visit to Ghana which will enable them to develop an international link. At the end of their time in school, they are well prepared for the next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons that pupils say are interesting. They make good use of all resources including information and communication technology (ICT) which really engages pupils' attention. 'Teachers do their absolute best to make learning fun', said one pupil. Consequently, they enjoy their work, strive hard to reach their targets and achieve well. Space limitations are overcome through good organisation and pupil management. Good assessment information enables teachers to plan work and meet the different learning needs in each class. Occasionally, pupils are all given the same task so there is not enough challenge to really extend the more able pupils. Classroom assistants provide skilled support and are used well to target different groups, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teachers value the support of parents in their children's learning, for example, with reading and homework and this further aids pupils' good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements, and is planned over a two year programme because there are two year groups in each class. Literacy and numeracy receive appropriate priority. Good results in science and above average ICT skills and full coverage of all the other subjects demonstrate the school's commitment to providing a well rounded education for every pupil. Suitable adaptations and targeted support ensure all pupils, and, in particular, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities participate fully in all aspects of school life. A wide range of enrichment activities make lessons more interesting; learning French, visits out of school, residential trips and visitors are used well to extend the curriculum and pupils' experiences. Pupils are keen to attend the good range of after-school clubs, including gymnastics and choir.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is excellent. Staff know pupils and their families well and are highly committed to providing the best possible care. All support agencies are used to benefit pupils' learning and welfare. Parents praised the school's provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust and meet all current requirements. A few parents are unhappy with the arrangements at the start of the school day. Leaders implemented these arrangements to ensure pupil safety; the narrow corridors in school and on the many steps and slopes outside regularly can quickly become very congested. The great majority of parents say the school is welcoming and approachable. Tracking systems provide good information about academic progress so extra help is quickly directed where most needed. Pupils strive hard to achieve their individual targets but, as yet, not all pupils are shown what they must do to reach them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The vision for every child 'to achieve their best at work and play' is demonstrated in challenging targets and pupils' good achievement. Well focused development and improvement plans are based on thorough self-evaluation. Governance is good. Each committee monitors an aspect of the improvement plan so governors are confident to challenge and hold the school to account. The curriculum leadership teams have a secure overview of strengths and areas for development. Good management systems ensure the school runs smoothly and the budget is carefully maintained. Staff targets for managing performance and professional development support the plans for improvement. The promotion of equal opportunities is good; the school ensures all pupils are able to access both the curriculum and all additional activities. Good arrangements promote community cohesion, strengthened by local and international connections that prepare pupils well for life in a multicultural society.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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**

Inspection of Emmanuel Holcombe Church of England Primary School, Bury, BL8 4PA

Thank you for making me so welcome and being so friendly and polite when I inspected your school. I enjoyed talking to you all. I was impressed by the play leaders helping the little ones outside at dinnertimes, and by your skills at the gym club. Your parents are pleased with the school, and do a lot to help you with your learning and by raising funds for extras, like the activity area.

Emmanuel is a good school. You make a good start in Reception class and work hard right through school so you make good progress and reach higher standards than in many schools. I could see how you much enjoy school and your attendance is excellent. You have good teachers who look after you very well. You told me they make learning fun and make sure you really understand your work. I was very impressed by how well you behave, look after your health and are very caring and helpful towards others. You all move around the building and outside with great care, making sure everyone is safe. I know you like to organise charity work, and are looking forward to hearing about your teacher's visit to Ghana.

The headteacher, the staff and the governors do a good job and are always looking for ways to make the school even better. So, I have asked them to make sure you all do as well as you can and reach those higher levels in writing and mathematics, and to make sure you all know how to reach your targets.