

Kettlethulme St James CofE (VA) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111459
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	325390
Inspection date	13 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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)	46
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 Brian Hill
Headteacher	Mr Paul Quirk
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Macclesfield Road Kettlethulme High Peak SK23 7QU
Telephone number	01663 732502

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	13 October 2008
Inspection number	325390

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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small Church of England voluntary aided school serves the village of Kettleshulme and the surrounding rural area. Children are of predominantly White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Very few pupils claim eligibility for free school meals. Children join the school from a variety of pre-school settings and a small number join the school in Year 3 from a nearby infant school. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Since the last inspection the school has gone through a period of instability. The new headteacher has been in post since February 2008. The school has the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Kettleshulme St James is a good school where pupils achieve well because of good teaching and learning combined with a good curriculum. Pupils respond extremely positively to the school's religious character and have a very good understanding of other cultures and faiths. Their personal development is outstanding. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility and make decisions which are highly valued. They take these tasks, including membership of the school council and their roles as playground pals, very seriously. Pupils have a real pride in their school. Behaviour is exemplary and there are excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy school. Above average attendance rates are a ringing endorsement of this. Mixed-year classes promote effectively a culture of caring for younger pupils and all pupils respond very positively to this. The school works effectively with the community and other schools to ensure pupils have the opportunity to experience a range of activities. Pupils' experiences are enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities, as well as being enriched through educational visits and visitors to the school. Pupils are very confident in making sensible choices about healthy living.

Children join the school with skills typical for their age for their age. However, this varies widely from year-to-year due to the small number of pupils involved. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 6, standards are above average and achievement is good in relation to pupils' individual starting points. However, too few pupils in Key Stage 2 are reaching the higher level in English. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their writing skills through extended and creative writing. Actions taken by the school to raise standards are proving very successful and standards at the end of Year 2 have risen significantly over the last year. However, although the impact of these initiatives has yet to be fully realised current standards of work seen in Year 6 are above average.

Assessment information is used effectively to meet the majority of pupils' individual needs in lessons and teaching assistants provide very good support for individuals so that all pupils make good progress. However, there is scope to challenge the more able pupils further in their independent work in lessons. The very strong quality of pastoral care and the good guidance and support the pupils receive results in their outstanding personal development. The progress of individuals, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is closely tracked and challenging learning targets are set. As a result they make good progress. These targets are clearly understood by the pupils and they know what they need to do to improve their work. The use of assessment information to track and plan pupils' progress is being successfully developed and is already having a positive impact upon standards. The school follows government guidelines to ensure pupils' safety and the safe recruitment of staff.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and, in the relatively short time he has been at the school, he has won the confidence of parents and pupils and the commitment of staff. Governors, too, provide strong support and challenge. Teachers and other adults work effectively as a team. All staff are involved in the school's accurate self-evaluation process and in improvement planning, which is based closely upon rigorous monitoring. However, subject leaders are undergoing training in order to improve their understanding of assessment criteria and play a more active role in measuring pupils' progress and in the school's evaluation and improvement processes. Swift action has already improved standards at the end of Year 2 and the school is fully aware of what needs to be done to improve standards further. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is good and helps children to achieve well. They are very well cared for and their well-being is of paramount importance. Children's skills on entry to the school vary greatly from year-to-year, but overall they are typical for their age. By the end of the Reception year they have made good progress as a result of good teaching and they reach standards above national expectations. Children make excellent progress in developing social and communication skills as a result of their interactions with older children in a setting that includes pupils in Years 1 and 2. They are able to talk confidently with each other, with staff and with visitors. Staff have high expectations and next steps are carefully planned as a result of the close monitoring of children's progress. Children learn effectively through play and, consequently, they have excellent attitudes and become very engaged in their learning. They take responsibility for choosing activities and enjoy doing special jobs such as tidying up. The children are helped by the school to adopt safe and healthy practices. The EYFS is well led and managed. The teacher and the teaching assistant work together very closely to ensure learning activities are carefully planned and delivered. The immediate environment is often used effectively to enrich learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide further challenge for the more able pupils in lessons so that they can achieve their full potential.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Standards year-on-year vary due to the small number of pupils involved in each year group. Standards in writing, reading, speaking and mathematics have improved over the last year and this is now being reflected in higher standards at the end of Year 2. Although these improvements are clearly seen in the above average standards of pupils' work throughout Key Stage 2, their impact is yet to be fully realised. Some pupils could make even better progress in English, mathematics and science to achieve higher standards. This has been the consequence of slower progress in the past and gaps in the pupils' learning. Inspection evidence shows that due to the positive steps taken by the leadership, progress has accelerated and is now good. Pupils are very well motivated and currently their progress is good but some of the more able pupils could do even better. A recent focus on writing with a common approach using new writing methods is helping to accelerate pupils' progress. For example, pupils are offered opportunities to enter writing competitions, attend a poetry workshop and write and make books. However, there is still the potential to extend opportunities for writing further. At present opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in writing creatively and at length are limited. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the extra help and support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils' behaviour around school and in lessons is exemplary. They are enthusiastic about their learning, have excellent relationships with each other and with their teachers and say they thoroughly enjoy school. The school successfully builds pupils' independence, confidence and self-esteem. They are keen to show off their achievements in the school embroidery and sculpture projects, for instance. Pupils are at ease with working collaboratively in lessons and organise themselves well. In lessons, they listen attentively and concentrate on tasks set. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and know all about the benefits of healthy eating, regular physical exercise and how to stay safe. Their contribution to the school and the wider community is good with, Phys Kids and peer mentoring systems in place. Pupils also take responsibility as year representatives on the school council, as road safety officers and as librarians. As a result, through their improving skills, working collaboratively together and taking responsibility, they are very well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and enables pupils to achieve well. Teachers present learning activities clearly so that pupils rapidly understand new ideas. The activities are well sequenced so that pupils build effectively on what has gone before. Teachers use questioning effectively to enable pupils to explore and develop their ideas and pupils are given frequent opportunities to work with a partner. Although lessons are well planned to meet the needs of most groups of pupils, there is still scope to challenge the more able pupils more effectively so that they can achieve their full potential. In all lessons teaching assistants give very good support to lower attaining pupils and those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This enables these pupils to participate confidently in whole-class activities, to complete tasks successfully and to make the same good progress as their peers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets the needs and interests of the pupils well. The school works hard through its links with other schools and the wider community to ensure the pupils have a stimulating range of activities both within and beyond the classroom. All pupils are given the opportunity to participate in residential visits, the youngest experiencing camping in the school grounds. Pupils in Year 6 have enjoyed discussing the experiences of a Second World War veteran and all pupils have been involved in working with an artist in residence and a member of the Embroiderers' Guild. A recent focus on writing with a common approach using new writing methods is helping to accelerate pupils' progress but there is still the potential to extend opportunities for writing further. A good programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education prepares pupils well for future challenges in life. All pupils have the opportunity to learn French and to learn a musical instrument. Pupils also appreciate the good range of clubs, extra-curricular activities and trips provided for them. They are particularly proud of their achievement in planning and creating their own wildlife garden.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a very supportive and encouraging atmosphere, pupils feel safe because they are very well cared for. Parents are right to be confident that their children are well looked after. Pupils feel certain that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They feel secure in the knowledge that staff are there to listen to them and help if problems arise. Skilled and effective teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well so that they can learn successfully alongside their classmates. The school works well with outside agencies to overcome barriers to pupils' learning. The senior leadership team tracks the academic progress of pupils effectively and pupils have individual learning targets to work towards. The plans to involve pupils in evaluating and planning their own progress are currently being addressed. Marking of work is regular and gives pupils good guidance about how to improve. Induction to the school is good, the school works very effectively in partnership with parents and the links with the high schools ensure a smooth transition to the next stage of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

As inspection evidence indicates, actions taken to improve standards across the school have been successful. This is a result of good leadership and management including very accurate evaluation of the issues facing the school. The headteacher and the senior leadership team combined have a good clear vision of the way forward. Consequently, effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection and the school provides good value for money.

The school promotes community cohesion well through its links with other schools and the local community. Staff have worked very effectively together and all have been involved in the school's self-evaluation and planning processes. Roles and responsibilities are clear and staff work together very effectively as a team. All are willing to play a part in school improvement. Effective monitoring systems are now in place, pupils' progress is tracked closely and challenging targets are set. This has improved provision, although this is done at present mainly by the senior leadership team. Effective training and support has been provided to ensure staff have a good understanding of assessment criteria and to enable middle managers and subject leaders to play a more effective role in evaluating their work and in planning for improvement. Governors are very well informed: they discharge their duties well, play a full part in the life of the school, and act effectively as critical friends.

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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?	1
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	2
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	1

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 Kettleshulme St James C of E (VA) Primary School, High Peak, SK23 7QU

I would like to thank you all for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views. I noticed your excellent behaviour and how well you get on with each other and with the adults in your school.

I was particularly impressed when you showed me your embroidery and sculpture projects. You have also done really well in planning and creating your own wildlife garden. It looks splendid.

Your headteacher and the teachers at your school work very hard and have been successful in improving things to make sure that your school provides a good quality of education. You told me that you thoroughly enjoy school and I can see why. Your teachers plan interesting lessons for you. Because of this you are making good progress and reach standards that are above those reached by most other children. Younger children in the Reception class are also looked after very well, they also thoroughly enjoy their learning and they make good progress.

You are well looked after and teachers give you good guidance about how to improve your work. The teachers have been working hard to help you improve your work recently and this has been successful. I think you can do even better in your writing if you are given more opportunities to write your own stories. Teaching is good and helps you to make good progress. However, I noticed that some of the more able pupils could have achieved more in lessons if they had been set harder work.

You can help by continuing to work hard and enjoying your learning. I wish you every success in the future.