

Penwortham Middleforth Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119382
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327014
Inspection date	11 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	192
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	Mrs Jenny Stanton
Headteacher	Mrs Carol Ann Aspden
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hill Road South Penwortham Preston PR1 9YE
Telephone number	01772 746024

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	11 September 2008
Inspection number	327014

Fax number

01772 464399

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	11 September 2008
Inspection number	327014

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well do pupils make progress and achieve, especially in writing and for higher attaining pupils?
- how consistent is the quality of teaching in terms of challenging all pupils, and ensuring that assessment is used well to support learning and progress?
- how effective is leadership in raising standards and improving provision?

Evidence was gathered from observing lessons and other aspects of the school's work, discussions with the headteacher, key staff, pupils and governors and scrutinising documents including the school's self-evaluation and development plans. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small number are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school runs a daily early morning breakfast club and provides care after school each day for small numbers of pupils. A pre-school group is run by the school for one afternoon per week for children due to start school the following September. A new headteacher has been in post since September 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Middleforth Church of England Primary is a good and improving school. The strong and effective leadership of the headteacher, well supported by staff and governors, ensures that pupils benefit from a very supportive environment based on Christian values. The care, guidance and support provided by the school are outstanding. Pupils thrive in this highly caring school and as a result their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding and their achievement is good. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They enjoy school a great deal and this is reflected in their excellent rate of attendance. They are very keen to learn and they thoroughly enjoy taking part in a good range of extra activities. Pupils say that the school is a very happy place where everybody gets on very well with each other and staff are kind and helpful. Pupils are very clear about how to keep themselves safe and they are very confident that staff will help if they have a problem. In their roles as 'play leaders' and 'buddies', many older pupils contribute to the feeling of security and well-being of younger pupils. Pupils' eagerness to take part in the good range of sporting activities and their understanding of healthy eating reflects their secure understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.

Pupils take on many responsibilities within the school with great pride. The school council is very active and enjoys activities such as encouraging recycling and organising the raising of funds for many different charities. Pupils make a very good contribution to the local community, for example performing and singing for different groups of people such as the elderly. The celebration of the traditional May Day activities by pupils is especially appreciated by the local community. Pupils develop a very strong awareness of different cultures and have some opportunities to meet people from different cultural backgrounds to themselves. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good.

Parents are highly supportive of the work of the school and they appreciate the good all-round education that their children receive. Parents are well informed of their children's progress and the school does a great deal to encourage and guide parents in supporting their children's learning. Parents appreciate being involved in the process of setting and reviewing learning targets with their children.

Good teaching helps pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Standards are above average and pupils build on and strengthen their skills, knowledge and understanding. Many exceed the challenging targets set for them based on the standards they reach at the end of Reception. Key Stage 2 test results have risen over a three year period and the provisional 2008 results show overall improvement on the 2007 results which were better than the national average. Improvements in results for writing were not as marked as in reading and mathematics, especially for boys. The good standard of much of the writing seen during the inspection and the school's data on pupils' good progress reflect the school's successful focus on improving progress and standards in writing.

Close tracking of pupils' progress and the use of challenging targets to guide learning help to lift expectations and support pupils' improving progress and standards. Teaching and lesson planning is guided by accurate and regular assessment so that lesson activities are well matched to pupils' different abilities and higher-attaining pupils are challenged. Lessons are well structured and have a clear purpose so that pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils like having targets that guide their learning saying that they help them to work even harder and

know what to aim for. Pupils enjoy lessons and find them fun and challenging. Many pupils, especially boys, enjoy writing in different contexts, such as writing letters from the perspective of a historical character. The planned curriculum ensures that pupils gain literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills at a good rate and that pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. In some year groups there is evidence of writing linked to other curriculum areas. However, the school now needs to ensure their plans to practise and improve writing through cross-curricular links are fully and consistently implemented across the school. Although pupils' work is marked regularly it varies in its helpfulness because there is not always enough guidance on how to improve. Pupils find activities that help them to assess their own progress, such as using lists of criteria to check their own work, helpful and motivating but these activities are not yet widespread. Opportunities for staff to share good practice in teaching, especially marking and pupils' involvement in assessing their own work, have not yet been fully developed and consequently there are inconsistencies in the effectiveness of some elements of teaching and learning.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils learning English as an additional language and those at risk of falling behind in their work make good progress. The school is quick to identify pupils who may need additional support. It seeks the best additional support for each child, drawing on its positive relationships with local agencies. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the learning and progress of these groups of pupils.

Significant improvement in the quality of teaching and achievement since the last inspection has been supported by accurate self-evaluation by the headteacher, governors and key leaders. A clear focus on the right priorities and effective action has led to rising standards, demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve. Governors visit the school regularly and have developed good working relationships with staff and their classes. Although the school's development plan targets the right priorities, governors are aware that the current lack of a senior leader group is a restraint on longer term strategic planning. Safeguarding arrangements meet government requirements and the school has rigorous arrangements to ensure the health and safety of pupils. Parents appreciate the arrangements introduced very recently to provide care for pupils before and after school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Levels of development when children start the Reception class are a little better than expected for their age. Staff help children to learn and develop well and consequently they make good progress and achieve well. By the time they leave the Reception class many achieve better than the expected learning goals for their age.

Much is done to familiarise children and their families with the new surroundings of the Reception class before children start school. The recently introduced pre-school group helps in this process. Staff ensure that they know the children well and provide activities that interest them and support their development. As a result, children settle down into the class quickly. Regular assessment of progress ensures that the planned activities help children to take the next steps in learning and to ensure that more able children are challenged. Children benefit from an appropriate range of activities that supports their development in all the required areas of learning. Provision is particularly effective for personal development and ensures that children make outstanding progress in this aspect of their learning. There is a good balance between activities that children choose for themselves and those that are led by adults. Learning and play are planned in detail for both indoors and outdoors. However, although the outdoor area

has been improved since the previous inspection and is used regularly, further improvements to the layout and resources used remain a priority for the school.

The Reception class is well led and managed. Regular monitoring of progress and provision ensures that priorities for development are clear. There is a secure understanding of children's needs and the requirements of the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure more opportunities for pupils to practise and improve writing skills in different contexts in subjects across the curriculum.
- Provide more opportunities to share best practice in teaching and learning, especially in the quality of marking and pupils' involvement in assessing their own learning.

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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	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	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?	1

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

12 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Penwortham Middleforth Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, PR1 9YE

Many thanks to all of you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You were very helpful and I enjoyed talking to many of you. It is important that you know what I found out and what I shall be writing in the inspection report to your parents.

I am pleased that you agree with me and think that Middleforth Church of England Primary is a good school. You are credit to your school. Your behaviour is excellent and you clearly enjoy school a great deal. You are making good progress in your work and achieve well because you are well taught and you have an excellent attitude to learning. It was good to hear that you like your lessons and that when you find the work quite hard you know that the staff will help you to understand. All the staff in your school take exceptionally good care of you so that you feel secure and happy in school. They make sure that if you need any extra help that you get it as soon as possible. Your headteacher, the governors and the staff work hard to make sure they are doing all that they can to help you to do your best. They agree with me that there are a few things to do that will help even more.

First, you need more chances to practise your writing through the work you do in different subjects so that you can make even better progress in improving your writing skills.

Second, staff have been working hard to develop the best ways to support you whilst you learn. The best ideas and ways of learning now need to be shared among staff so that you all get the chance to do the best that you can.

Do enjoy the rest of your time at school. You are being very well prepared for your futures.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector