

Leyland Methodist Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119400
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327019
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Joe Clark

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Matthew Tomlinson
Headteacher	Mr Mark Mackley
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2006
School address	Canberra Road Leyland Lancashire PR25 3ET
Telephone number	01772 423694
Fax number	01772 451272

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an above average size school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and all speak English as their first language. Pupils' social and economic circumstances are generally more favourable than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school shares the site with an infant school and most of its pupils transfer to the junior school. There is extended provision before and after-school managed by an external agency on behalf of both schools. The school has achieved the Financial Management in Schools standard.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory but improving school. The school's mission to 'provide for children and staff a caring and Christian community' is fulfilled through the excellent relationships that exist among staff and pupils and the effective way the personal development of pupils is promoted. Parents are very pleased with this aspect of the school's work: 'The school has a sound Christian ethos', 'Leyland Methodist is a lovely school with a team of caring staff' and 'The Christian ethos is evident throughout the school in the kind, caring attitudes of the pupils,' were typical parental comments. The curriculum is satisfactory with a strength in provision for pupils' personal development that leads to pupils' personal qualities being a strength of the school. Pupils' attitudes to learning are outstanding and their behaviour is good. They enjoy coming to school where their attendance is excellent. Pupils say there is very little bullying and they feel safe in school. They know about the importance of healthy lifestyles and adopting safe practices. Good sporting enrichment of the curriculum enables pupils to keep fit and enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Preparation for the next stage of learning is satisfactory. The pastoral care of pupils is good and they receive satisfactory guidance on how to improve their academic work.

Recent changes and disruption to staffing have slowed the rate of improvement. These have now been largely, but not entirely, resolved and there are signs of improvement in key areas with progress accelerating across the school. Teaching is satisfactory and much improved so that learning is quickening. In recent years, pupils have joined Year 3 with standards that are generally well above average. Standards by the end of Year 6 have, however, been broadly average with some pupils underachieving. This trend was reversed in 2008 where unvalidated national comparative data indicate that, although standards were broadly average they were improving. Given pupils' starting points their achievement was satisfactory. Challenging targets for each year group have been set and are being rigorously pursued. Currently, evidence seen for Year 6 pupils shows they are on track to achieve their targets and standards are higher than the previous year. This reflects the continuing pattern of overcoming underachievement and much better progress than has been the case in the past. Progress is now satisfactory for most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most lessons seen are interesting and sustain pupils' enthusiasm but the challenge for more able pupils is not always evident and this leads to these pupils not making enough progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Better systems of monitoring and more effective tracking of pupils' progress are leading to improvement. Good support is being provided by the local authority's Improving Schools Programme. The effectiveness of subject leadership is variable and does not contribute fully to school improvement. Governance is satisfactory. The school has the confidence of the parents and has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science and ensure that pupils continue to meet the challenging targets set for them.
- Improve the quality of provision for the more able pupils so that they are suitably challenged to extend existing skills and knowledge.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they make a better contribution to school improvement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is currently satisfactory. The downward trend in standards seen in recent years has been reversed and current standards, although broadly average, are improving rapidly. Good support by the local authority leading to improvements to aspects of management and teaching, especially in using assessment, are accelerating progress. Unvalidated data for 2008 show that standards at the end of Year 6 were broadly average. The school's tracking shows that the achievement of this cohort of pupils was satisfactory. The percentage of pupils reaching higher than the nationally expected standard of Level 5 was in line with the national average in English and mathematics and slightly above average in science. Much better systems for identifying pupils who are underachieving, leading to effective interventions, have boosted the progress of most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, this is not yet the case for the more able pupils who are not always making enough progress. Challenging targets have been set across the school and data held by it show that progress is accelerating at a good pace in most classes. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach higher standards than in recent years and data for other year groups indicate higher standards in future.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development, is good. Their spiritual development is excellent. Joint acts of worship with the infant school and a local Roman Catholic primary school help promote understanding and tolerance. Behaviour is good. Pupils like the new behaviour policy which they say teachers use fairly. One effect of the new policy is a dramatic reduction in the number of exclusions: last year there was none. Pupils say there is very little bullying and what there is, is quickly sorted out. They enjoy school, especially after school activities. Attendance and attitudes to learning are excellent. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and support learning well. The Year 6 residential visit helps develop tolerance and understanding of others. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibility and exercise leadership skills; school councillors take their responsibilities seriously. Links with the local community are good. The school has several healthy school awards and the Activemark award for sport. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the need for healthy eating and taking regular exercise. They know how to keep safe. Pupils leave school with average basic skills and good social skills which is a satisfactory preparation for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and some good lessons were seen. There have been improvements in teaching recently, although variations in quality remain. The rate of learning in lessons, however, is accelerating. Recent improvements in assessment practice are giving teachers a clearer view of pupils' progress and potential so that work can be more closely matched to pupils' needs.

Teaching assistants effectively support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but have little impact on the progress of other groups. Good classroom relationships encourage good attitudes to learning and a willingness to persevere with tasks. In good lessons, tasks are planned to challenge pupils of all abilities and help them meet their targets. In less effective lessons, the more able pupils are not extended enough, especially in writing and mathematics. The good practice and expertise demonstrated by some teachers are not always shared with colleagues. Work is generally well presented but some teachers accept work that is untidy and disorganised. In most lessons, teachers provide useful feedback to pupils on how well they are doing. The marking policy is of a good quality but is not yet used consistently by all teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met. The curriculum meets the needs of most groups of learners, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but does not effectively support the needs of more able pupils. A good range of extra-curricular activities, especially in sport, support learning and promote good personal development. Enrichment activities are satisfactory. Skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are taught well, but not enough use is then made of pupils' ICT skills in other subjects. Planning to introduce a more creative curriculum is at an early stage. Links with local secondary schools and colleges as well as local sports clubs provide good curriculum support, especially in sport but also in design technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care of pupils is good. Safeguarding measures meet all requirements, child protection strategies are managed well and pupils are taught how to stay safe. Teachers and other adults provide good support for pupils' emotional development and encourage good work and behaviour through a valued system of awards. Good links with the infant school help pupils to make a smooth transition into Year 3. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support. Guidance to support pupils' academic progress is satisfactory with recent improvements in the support provided for more able pupils. The learning goals that are given at the start of lessons provide a clear purpose for learning and ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils have targets for learning that provide advice on how they can improve. In writing, these are generally helpful so pupils know the next steps. In mathematics, however, pupils often do not understand the guidance fully so it has a limited impact on learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving with the good support of the local authority. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and how it is led and managed. A restructuring programme is underway to bring greater stability and coherence to staffing. The headteacher has accurately identified where improvement is needed and is giving clear direction for change. New tracking systems are helping to track pupils' progress more accurately so that pupils who can do better are picked out and given suitable support. As a result, progress across the school is accelerating. The quality of management by subject leaders, some of which are new, is variable. There are some good systems developing to monitor how well pupils are

progressing. Most crucially, they identify where there is underachievement, but these systems are not yet embedded in all subjects. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Good and useful links have been established with local communities but national and international links are not as strong. Governance is satisfactory ensuring that the school meets statutory requirements. The school has not progressed as much as it should have since the last inspection. Nevertheless, recent improvements have enabled the school to turn a corner and it is now improving rapidly. The school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve in future.

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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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

25 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leyland Methodist Junior School, Lancashire PR25 3ET

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed talking to you, especially when dodging the ball in the football pen! We would like to tell you what we found on our inspection. Overall, yours is a satisfactory school, but one which does some things really well.

These are the main strengths of the school:

- your attendance is outstanding
- your attitudes to learning are excellent and your behaviour is good
- everyone in the school gets on very well together
- the school looks after you very well
- your spiritual development is exceptionally good.

These are the three things we think the school can work on to make improvements:

- help you all to achieve higher standards in writing and mathematics
- ensure those of you with high ability achieve the very best you can
- find even better ways of promoting good achievement and high standards in all subjects.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard, particularly in improving your writing and numeracy skills.

Thank you once again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Joe Clark

Lead inspector