

Leyland Methodist Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119401
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327020
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Carole Cressey

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	Infant
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	210
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 Julie Walling
Headteacher	Mrs Heather Whyte
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Canberra Road Leyland Lancashire PR25 3ET
Telephone number	01772 431914
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage in three Reception classes. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds. Most pupils are from White British heritage; a very small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds; there are no pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average; the number of pupils who receive free school meals is well below average. There is a breakfast club, after-school care and pre-school provision on the school's site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which is exceptionally well led and managed. The school exudes a strong Christian ethos in which the well-being, enjoyment and achievement of every pupil are evident in all aspects of its work. The school's success can be seen by its popularity in the local community. Most parents speak very highly of the school and their confidence is well placed. The following comment is typical of many, 'A great school, where children are happy, safe and secure. This is a positive environment where our child is developing socially and spiritually as well as academically.'

The leadership team rigorously monitors the quality of all aspects of the school's work. This results in outstanding teaching, care, guidance and support which, along with a very responsive curriculum, ensures that each pupil meets or exceeds the very challenging targets set for them. Behaviour and attitudes are exemplary, standards are significantly above average and pupils are developing a love of learning and an understanding of their responsibility to each other and the wider local and world community.

From the minute pupils happily leave their parents and carers in the morning, to when they go to meet them at the end of the day, they show a tangible enjoyment for all the exciting experiences the school has to offer them.

Children start school in the Reception class with levels of development that are expected for their ages. All pupils achieve exceptionally well and by the end of Year 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently significantly above average. The high standards of pupils' basic skills are also self evident in their topic work, whether it has a science, history, geography, personal development or other focus. Standards in creative subjects, such as music and art and physical education, are also very high.

The key to pupils' outstanding success is the way the excellent teaching, curriculum and care creates an exciting environment for learning. Teaching is consistently challenging and of a very high quality. Lessons, break times and clubs buzz with exciting, practical and challenging activities and as a result pupils become highly motivated learners. There are very reliable arrangements for checking on pupils' attainment regularly and pupils have a clear understanding on how to improve their work.

Throughout the school literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology make a vital contribution to the future role of pupils' in society and their economic well-being. An excellent programme of social and health education provides the children with the necessary tools to develop personal safety, care and healthy living. The wearing of 'funky footwear' is just one way pupils are encouraged to become healthier and walk to school.

Leadership attaches a major importance to fostering a harmonious and inclusive community. There is a very strong contribution to community cohesion through excellent links with the local community and through effective national and global links. However, the school recognises that it needs to do more to expand pupils' involvement with communities that differ from their own.

The school judges itself as outstanding and the inspection agrees. The school has made excellent progress since the previous inspection; the success of its actions also shows that the school is exceptionally well placed to continue to be very successful.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Most children enter the school with skills and abilities which are broadly typical for their age. The exceptionally high quality of the leadership and management ensures that the Reception classes are wonderful places to learn. Once children are immersed in the exciting learning environment they make significant gains. By the time they leave Reception most children are meeting the early learning goals expected for their age, a significant number are exceeding them and standards overall are above average. A wide range of exciting, high quality resources and activities challenge the children and inspire them to learn. Wherever possible, children handle real materials and staff are always on hand to extend their knowledge and understanding. There is a very good balance between activities where children discover things for themselves and those where they work with an adult. The welfare of the children is promoted extremely well and behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Children are encouraged to become independent and confident learners. They enjoy the many opportunities to explore, investigate and consolidate their skills, often following a topic or theme such as 'frogs'. Basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy are woven very imaginatively into every task and, as a result, children are well launched into reading, writing and number by the time they move into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop further pupils' experience of cultures and communities that differ from their own.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and standards are significantly above average. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is above average and the excellent start pupils receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage continues in Key Stage 1. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in Years 1 and 2 and in the 2008 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, standards overall were significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the present Year 2, standards are similarly high and pupils' achievement is outstanding. Most pupils are reaching the expected levels for their ages in reading, writing, mathematics and science and over a third are reaching the higher levels. As a result of very well targeted intervention, standards in writing across the school have improved since the previous inspection especially for boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress towards the targets set for their learning. The very few pupils from minority ethnic heritages achieve equally well and reach the standards expected for their ages and abilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils greatly enjoy school, attendance is excellent and behaviour is generally outstanding. Pupils talk with confidence to a whole class, eagerly engage visitors in conversations and interact with sensitivity and consideration in team activities. They have a keen awareness of right and wrong and have a strong appreciation of the spiritual dimension of life. Seeing a family of chicks hatch out from their shells and observing frog spawn turn into tadpoles are just two of the ways these pupils are learning about the wonders of creation. They have a good

understanding of the many aspects of culture and the importance of having respect and tolerance for everyone. However, they do not have sufficient first hand familiarity with communities and cultures in their own country that differ greatly from their own. They eat and play with outstanding focus on keeping fit and healthy and they are meticulous about personal hygiene. They say school is a very safe place with hardly any unpleasantness between pupils. Pupils know how to act sensibly to keep themselves safe in traffic or other situations. They make a real contribution to the life of their local community, collecting considerable amounts of money for charities and singing in the local church at important festivals such as Easter and Christmas. The school provides opportunities for pupils to have a say in how things are done and everyone is very aware for their responsibilities to recycling waste and conserving energy. Pupils understand what lies ahead with the next stages of education. Their preparation for moving on is excellent.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is consistently challenging and of a very high quality. Relationships are excellent and pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and work. Classrooms and shared areas provide an array of exciting learning experiences for pupils to explore and a wealth of clues and strategies are displayed to help them succeed as learners. High quality and well organised resources, which are easily accessible to the pupils, encourage independence and responsibility. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are frequently taught through exciting topics linked with other subjects, such as history or geography and imaginative play situations. The use of music to create atmosphere, the highly imaginative use of information and communication technology, exceptionally enthusiastic interactions and resources, such as, 'magic pencils' and different shaped papers, all provide a motivation for young writers. Such strategies have been especially successful in raising standards in writing across the school and in particular for engaging the interests of boys. Groups are flexible and ensure pupils have the right level of work and support to do well, especially for those pupils in mixed age classes. Daily group sessions when pupils learn their letters and sounds are especially successful in improving pupils' literacy skills. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and work very effectively to raise standards for pupils of all abilities. Teachers use information from day-to-day assessments and tests to pinpoint accurately each pupil's progress and carefully identify the next steps in learning. Encouraging comments, sensitive but challenging questions and precise marking provide pupils with the tools to be confident learners who know what they need to do to improve their work. The school is very highly praised by most parents and works very well with them to involve them in their children's work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is excellent. Very effective curriculum planning over a two year cycle ensures that all pupils, whether in a single age or a mixed-age class, have timely provision to cover all elements of the National Curriculum. Some subjects are taught in concentrated blocks of time to give coherence to the topic in hand. Information and communication technology is used very effectively across the curriculum. For example, in science, where Year 1 pupils were observed making impressive progress classifying features of materials. Where teachers have particular expertise, for instance in music, this is put to best advantage by prudent deployment of staff.

The expertise of physical education staff from Worden Sports College is warmly welcomed and this enhances provision across a wide range of sporting and gymnastic activities. The curriculum is enriched by input from many visitors, including the police and fire service. Opportunities to further pupils' personal, social and health education are strong and draw on a wide range of expertise. The many and varied visits, for example, to Blackpool Tower and a farm, widen pupils' experience and add fun and enjoyment. The school knows that provision of opportunities for pupils to gain familiarity with cultures other than their own is an area for development. Pupils value highly the wealth of additional activities that are available at lunch time and after school. These range from the choir, to gym club, to sign language. An extra-curricular club for Spanish has proved so popular that some Spanish teaching is shortly to be incorporated in the main curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are in line with statutory requirements. All staff do their utmost to ensure that pupils are happy in school and that they thrive academically and in their personal development. There is a very high standard of care on the playground and around the school. Pupils are well wrapped up for outdoor play on a cold day and there is very painstaking support for any who need extra help on account of their difficulties in learning or in other ways. Academic guidance is excellent. The special educational needs coordinator is thorough in identifying pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or who appear to be at risk of slipping behind. Support and intervention to help such pupils are very effective. There are very strong links with other agencies to fund and coordinate support. The guidance given to pupils about what they should do to improve is excellent. Targets are clearly written and are in a form which pupils understand easily and which they readily refer to.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding resulting in excellence in all aspects of its work. The headteacher is very well supported by an excellent deputy headteacher and a supportive and knowledgeable governing body. Assessments, test results, the quality of the teaching and learning and the curriculum are all monitored and evaluated. This leads to improvements that ensure pupils' learning is exciting and relevant and that consistently high standards are maintained throughout the school. Strategies to improve writing since the previous inspection have been particularly successful. Leadership values all the staff and deploys them very effectively utilising their skills and talents to enrich pupils' learning. The headteacher is particularly skilled at developing links with other schools and external agencies. These links provide valuable support for pupils and enrich their learning. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It has thoughtfully implemented a number of strategies to extend pupils' awareness of their own and the wider global community. The school has a very accurate insight into its strengths and weaknesses and is constantly looking for new challenges to enhance the education of its pupils. It gives excellent value for money.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leyland Methodist Infant School, Lancashire, PR25 3ET

We really enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for talking to us and being so friendly. You told us that school is fun and that the teachers really help you to learn such a lot. Well, we agree with you. Your school is outstanding. That means you are all working very very hard and reaching very high standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

It also means you are exceptionally (We are using big words because you are such good readers) well behaved and polite. It was so good to see how very kind you are to each other and how you share your equipment, play together really well and help each other in lessons.

Your teachers are excellent. They are always thinking of new and exciting things for you to do so that you become even cleverer.

We were also very pleased to see that you are becoming very caring children who are aware of the importance of respecting other people and taking care of people who are not as fortunate as you might be. We also know that you have been learning about other religions and about children who live in other countries. To help you even more we have asked your school to help you to learn more about children in this country who have different religions, traditions and home backgrounds.

We can tell that you enjoy coming to school and your mums and dads told us that when you get home many of you carry on finding out about things you have learned in school. This shows just how much you enjoy learning about new things.

We hope you will always enjoy learning and going to school and that it will help you to become very happy and clever grown-ups.

You go to an excellent school. Do remember to always work really hard and learn lots and lots of new and exciting things. We hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now.

Yours faithfully

Carole Cressey and Jim Bennetts

Inspectors