

# Scarisbrick St Mark's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119410
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327025
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Dower

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	76
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Amanda Claeys
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Marilyn Freeman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Southport Road Scarisbrick Ormskirk Lancashire L40 9RE

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 September 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation
- pupils' progress and achievement in English and mathematics
- expectation and challenge in the mixed-age classes
- how well prepared pupils are for the next stage in their education.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, analyses of pupils' work, performance data, parents' questionnaire returns and the school's documentation, and from discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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 the report.

## Description of the school

St Mark's Church of England Primary School is much smaller than most primary schools. It serves an area of average social and economic circumstances, the community being largely dependent on agriculture. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average and there are fewer pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than is usually seen in similar schools. Pupils are from White British backgrounds. They are taught in three mixed age classes; class 1 is Reception and Year 1, class 2 is Years 2/3/4, class 3 is Years 5/6. The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and national Healthy Schools Status in 2007 and it holds the Sports Activemark.

## 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 which provides outstanding care for pupils. Christian values and respect for the individuality of every child are at the heart of what it is about. Parents are supportive and particularly appreciate the attention and support their children receive. The school is involved in a range of community activities and many parents play an active role in its day-to-day life. There is a sense of common purpose and the school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion.

Caution is needed when comparing the school's results with national data in any one year because of the small number of pupils involved. Trends over time are a more reliable indicator of how well the school is performing. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been slightly above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Achievement in Key Stage 1 has been satisfactory but improved to good this year when standards rose. This was because of better monitoring of pupils' progress and more effective intervention to tackle weaknesses. At the end of Year 6, standards have been above average in English and average in mathematics. Standards in science have improved markedly to well above expected levels over the last three years. Provisional results for 2008 and inspection evidence indicate that standards improved in mathematics and the school met its targets in the subject. The Level 4 target was met in English but not at the higher Level 5 for writing. This is an improvement priority for the school. Overall, pupils' progress and achievement are good.

Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They are confident and articulate and have good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. There are few opportunities, however, for them to develop enterprise skills. School is an enjoyable place to be and pupils get on well together and behave well. They are sensitive to those less fortunate than themselves and their understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing disabled people in society is exceptional. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and that rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. They take plenty of exercise, eat sensibly and stay fit and well. Responsibilities are undertaken by the older pupils as mentors to the younger children and the school council has succeeded in getting better play equipment and improved toilet facilities. There are close links with the local church and pupils participate in a range of village activities. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

Teaching and learning are good. In lessons pupils work well together and independently. They listen attentively and have the ability to concentrate for extended periods of time. The good standard of presentation in their books testifies to the pride they take in their work. Lesson planning is good and learning activities are structured to meet the needs of all in the mixed-age classes. Some parents expressed concern about class sizes. Inspection evidence found that pupils are being challenged in lessons and that their progress is good. It is their ability to judge for themselves how well they are doing and what they must do to improve that is not so well developed. The school has put in place strategies to get pupils to be more self-critical but it is too soon to measure their effectiveness. Pupils' speaking skills are good and their reading is currently above average. Standards in writing, whilst satisfactory, are held back by a relative weakness in pupils' ability to transfer their writing skills to subjects other than literacy.

The requirements of the National Curriculum are met fully. There is a good balance between providing for pupils' basic skills and their knowledge of their own cultural heritage and that of

people from different backgrounds. In science, for example, pupils have well developed investigative and recording skills as well as a good understanding of the world around them. Provision for the teaching of ICT is well established and it is used effectively as a teaching and learning aid. Pupils have the opportunity to broaden their understanding of language through the study of Spanish. The personal, social and health education programme underpins pupils' good personal development. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle but the school recognises that even more needs to be done to increase pupils' awareness of health-related issues, particularly in the areas of sex education, coping with stress and the dangers of substance abuse. Extra-curricular activities are well attended and do much to increase pupils' enjoyment of school and their sense of well-being.

Pupils like the fact that they are known as individuals by all who work in the school. This sense of being understood and valued in a small and harmonious community gives them confidence and underpins their good academic and personal development. As a result, they and their parents rightly see the care and support they receive as strengths of the school. Excellent use is made of outside agencies to support the small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those who are vulnerable. The teaching assistants are skilled and effective in helping such pupils and in providing more challenging learning activities for the high attaining pupils. There are good procedures to monitor pupils' academic progress over time and to intervene when difficulties are encountered. Risk assessments are conducted on a regular basis and safeguarding and health and safety requirements are met.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher's vision for the school, her sense of purpose and her high expectations, have driven the rise in standards over recent years. She is well supported by able and committed teachers and teaching and administrative assistants who willingly and effectively share a range of responsibilities. Subject leadership is good but the management of time and energy when leading on more than one curriculum area is a constant challenge in such a small school. Governors are knowledgeable and involved in day-to-day activities. They play their part in forward planning and as critical friends. The site supervisor has created attractive and well maintained grounds. When asked what was best about their school, pupils were quick to put the flower beds, the pond and the outside play areas near the top of the list. The school has an accurate picture of how well it is doing and what the priorities must be to improve further. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in raising standards and increasing the pace of learning in lessons. This, allied with the community's support, places the school in a strong position to do even better.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's development when they start in the Reception year is typical for their age. They settle quickly because of the good induction programme and soon feel safe, secure and cared for. The school works exceptionally well with parents who appreciate the warm and welcoming atmosphere which greets their children. The small number of children each year means that they learn separately when appropriate but also alongside older pupils occasionally. As a result, their language and social skills improve significantly. Progress overall is good and by the start of Year 1 skills are usually slightly higher than those expected at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Such progress results from effective teaching and the good support and guidance of the class 1 assistant. Children play well together, share toys and equipment and talk about their experiences. As a result, their personal development is rapid. There is an

appropriate balance between teacher directed learning and opportunities for children to explore and find out things for themselves. This is helped by the security of the grounds and the good level of supervision. The outside play area is a particularly rich learning environment and it is supplemented by a range of appropriate equipment. The EYFS is well led and children's progress is monitored regularly. The small steps they achieve are evaluated to fine-tune provision further and identify priorities for improvement.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Extend opportunities for pupils to write fluently and accurately in different contexts in all subjects.
- Develop pupils' ability to judge for themselves how well they are doing and what they must do to improve.

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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?	1
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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	1
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**

24 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Scarisbrick St Mark's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, L40 9RE

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed my day with you immensely and only wished I had had more time to see all the interesting things you are doing in lessons and in the after-school clubs. I particularly appreciated talking to many of you and hearing how much you enjoy school. Please thank your parents for sending in the questionnaire returns.

St Mark's is a good school. You make rapid progress in your work and reach above average standards by the time you leave. You have the personal qualities to be successful in life and the skills and knowledge to make the most of the next stage of your education. I was particularly impressed by how well you get on together and your concern for those less fortunate than yourselves, particularly those who are disabled. The way in which you work with and contribute to your local community is excellent. Many of you told me that you like being in a small school where you are known and valued as individuals. The care and support you receive is certainly of a very high quality.

You look after your school well and appreciate the care staff take to give you the best possible start to your education. I did have time to see the colourful and interesting outdoor facilities and examples of your art work on display inside school. Your creative work is very good.

There are two areas where I believe improvements could be made. You work hard in English but you could do even better if you were given more opportunities to practice writing for different purposes in all subjects. There are occasions when you are not encouraged to be self-critical and decide for yourselves how well you are doing and what you should do to improve. I have asked your school to expect you to do this more often.

My best wishes to you all. I hope this academic year is a successful one for every pupil.

Yours sincerely

Brian Dower

Lead inspector