

St James' Church of England Primary School, Clitheroe

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 119419 |
| Local Authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 327030 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 December 2008 |
| Reporting inspector | George Crowther |

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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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 270 |
| 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 Mark Clayton |
| Headteacher | Mr Paul Adnitt |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 June 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Greenacre Street Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 1ED |
| Telephone number | 01200 423599 |

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| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 December 2008 |
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Fax number

01200 443249

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school situated close to the centre of the market town of Clitheroe. It draws pupils from a wide area and its social context is no more or less favourable than most schools. A below average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small but growing number from a Pakistani background; very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Since the last inspection, staff changes have disrupted the development of the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. A key strength is the way in which the school's Christian values create a happy, friendly atmosphere that pervades its day-to-day life. This encourages pupils to enjoy their learning. Excellent support for pupils' pastoral care is reflected in their outstanding behaviour and very positive relationships. Parents value these strengths highly. A typical comment was 'It's a school where each child is important and cared for.' At present, however, the school is not capitalising sufficiently on these strengths to ensure that each pupil makes as much academic progress as possible, particularly during Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching and learning although satisfactory overall is not always good enough. Whilst leaders have identified weaknesses, and are taking steps to deal with them, action has not yet been sufficiently focused and rigorous to raise pupils' achievement significantly.

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 1 and 2 and reach broadly average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Whilst basic skills are taught methodically, lessons are not always challenging enough to ensure pupils make the progress of which they are capable. In Years 3 to 6, whilst pupils make satisfactory progress overall, the quality of teaching and learning varies too much. The best lessons move at pace and the work is carefully targeted to help pupils learn quickly; in others, the pace of learning is too slow and the work is not sufficiently challenging to ensure that the pupils make good progress. Unvalidated results of national tests in 2008 show standards are broadly average except in writing which is lower because pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length.

The pupils enjoy school and, in most lessons, are very keen to learn. Relationships are very positive with pupils going out of their way to be friendly and helpful. The pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school community through their exceptionally good behaviour and the way in which they take on extra responsibilities. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. Pupils' good personal qualities prepare them well for the future, but aspects of their academic skills are not good enough. A satisfactory curriculum is enriched considerably by a wide range of activities outside lessons. Levels of pastoral care and support for pupils are first rate, but guidance for their academic development is not yet comprehensive enough.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Whilst staff changes at all levels have disrupted the development of the school, action to tackle weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning, and hence pupils' achievement, has not been rigorous enough. The current leadership team, however, is developing better systems to track pupils' progress and is taking more determined action to tackle underachievement. There are early signs that this is having a positive impact, for example on the improved progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Although the school's self-evaluation was too positive, leaders do have a clear picture of what needs to be done next. This puts the school in a sound position to improve its work.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Reception year because teaching is good. Well planned activities develop their interests and skills and help them to enjoy learning. Children's standards when they start school are broadly typical for their age, but have been falling. They make

particularly good progress in language and mathematics because the teaching places a strong emphasis on developing these skills. Overall standards as pupils start in Year 1 are broadly average with the majority reaching the level expected and an increasing number exceeding this. The children are well cared for and there is a good focus on personal development so that children work happily alongside each other and grow in confidence and independence. Children learn to take turns and accept responsibility when using equipment and resources in a happy, stimulating environment. This is enhanced by a good balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities, and by the very warm relationships that encourage children to do their best. Activities in the outdoor area extend the children's learning effectively. Staff have recently begun to observe individual children's development more closely, and this is enabling them to plan activities that challenge children at an appropriate level. Leadership and management are good, with a clear view of what needs to be done to improve the children's learning still further. Staff ensure that all statutory welfare requirements are met and this leads to children working safely and happily both in and out of doors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and in Years 3 to 6.
- Increase the proportion of good lessons where the quality of teaching and learning enables pupils to make rapid progress.
- Ensure that the action leaders take to tackle underachievement is more focused and rigorous.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils leave school with broadly average standards. Skills when children start school are typical for their age, but have been falling. In the Reception year, children make good progress in all areas of their learning. By the time they join Year 1; standards are rising but overall are still broadly average. Progress in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 2 standards are broadly average, best in mathematics but rather weaker in writing. Unvalidated results of the 2008 Year 6 national tests were broadly average overall, and pupils made better progress than in the previous year when it was inadequate. In 2008, the weakest aspect was writing. Pupils' work shows that writing skills are not being built systematically enough on a range of challenging tasks. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to others, but there are examples of good progress where needs have been identified precisely and extra support given. The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal skills are good. Some features are outstanding. The school provides a very positive environment for learning and strong support for pupils' personal development. Parents appreciate the ways in which the staff nurture pupils' confidence and help them to develop as individuals. By Year 6, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. A typical comment was 'Lessons are fun, but we also have to work hard.' Behaviour in lessons and around the school is first rate. Relationships are outstanding with pupils showing great respect for each other. Attendance

is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Experiences in school, and activities such as taking a keen interest in the environment, foster the pupils' growing understanding of their place in the wider world. Older pupils are aware of other cultures and faiths, but have a fairly narrow experience of contrasting communities in the United Kingdom. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community. They eagerly carry out many responsibilities that help the school to run smoothly. Their good personal skills equip them well for the future, but their academic skills are not as strong as they could be.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching, but too many lessons are satisfactory and do not help the pupils to make sufficient progress. Where teaching is good, well-planned activities are closely matched to pupils' needs. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and set a brisk pace that encourages the pupils to work rapidly. They explain new ideas in a lively way that makes pupils keen to learn. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of learning is too slow and the work is not always challenging enough, particularly for the more able pupils. Teaching assistants help many pupils, particularly those who find learning difficult, to make good progress. There have been weaknesses in the school's systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress, but recent improvements are helping the school to detect and tackle potential underachievement more rigorously. The progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is tracked carefully, which has contributed to good gains for some of these pupils. Marking does not consistently point out to pupils how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In some respects, the curriculum meets the needs and interests of the pupils very well. For example, a rich variety of activities outside lessons, from Spanish to dance, is much enjoyed by the pupils and highly valued by parents. A typical comment was, 'All of my children have learnt a musical instrument since starting at this school. I think it's a fantastic opportunity.' On the other hand, the curriculum for English, mathematics and science has weaknesses. It is not always planned well enough to meet the needs of all pupils and in English pupils have too few opportunities for writing and this holds back their progress. Work planned for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is usually well matched to their needs and often leads to good progress. A strong programme of personal and social education contributes well to pupils growing independence and ability to relate well to each other. For example, a residential trip for the older pupils develops a wide range of personal skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support is outstanding. The school's caring, Christian ethos creates an environment in which pupils' welfare is of the highest importance. Very positive relationships between the staff, children and parents ensure that the pupils are happy, safe and ready to learn. The school gives particularly good support to any pupils who are vulnerable because of challenges in their lives. Measures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health, safety and well-being are in

place and meet requirements. Systems for supporting pupils' academic development have been weak, but are now improving. Tracking of pupils' progress is better and teachers have a much clearer view of what their pupils need to learn next. This information is being used well to set pupils targets in literacy and numeracy but as yet not all pupils are sufficiently informed about them and so are unsure about the next steps for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders have created and sustained a very positive environment in which pupils are happy and keen to do well. This, combined with excellent support for pupils' personal development, provides a very good platform for achievement. At present, however, leaders are not capitalising on these firm foundations because the school's self-evaluation is too positive and, as a result, key weaknesses have not been identified clearly enough or tackled. For example, the quality of teaching and learning is monitored, but insufficient action has been taken to fully resolve weaknesses, particularly in Years 3 to 6. However, with the support of the local authority the school is moving forward. A firmer audit has given the headteacher a clearer view about how the school can improve and action is now being taken to raise pupils' achievement. It is too early to judge whether these measures, designed for implementation across the whole school, are having the desired effect on results of national tests. Nevertheless, there are signs, as in the improved tracking of pupils' progress, that changes are improving pupils' progress. Governors make a satisfactory contribution to leading the school. They have a good grasp of the social strengths of the school, but are not sufficiently aware of weaknesses in pupils' achievement and what the school is doing about them. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. This is a community where all are welcomed and difference respected. However, pupils have too little understanding of contrasting communities in the United Kingdom.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

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|--|---|
| 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? | 2 |

Leadership and management

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|--|-----|
| 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**

10 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James' Church of England Primary School, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1ED

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we inspected your school to find out how well you are doing.

It's clear you enjoy being at school, which is not surprising because it's a very happy place where everyone gets on well together. In the lessons we visited, you were always ready to talk to us and keen to learn. Around the school, you behave extremely well and you are polite. You do a very good job helping your school to run smoothly, such as organising assemblies and when older pupils act as play leaders for the younger ones. You appreciate the way the staff look after you and help you to feel safe.

Some of you are making good progress with your work, but many of you could be doing better, particularly the older pupils. The teaching is good in many lessons, but there are times when you are not expected to work quickly enough, or the work is not sufficiently challenging to help you learn rapidly. Many of you say you enjoy the wide range of activities and clubs outside lessons. We agree this is a strength of your school, but work in English and mathematics does not always help you to make as much progress as possible. The staff do an exceptional job in providing the care and support that helps you to be happy at school, but you sometimes need more help to make sure you are doing as well as you can with your work. Your headteacher and the staff are keen to find the best ways to make your school even better.

We have asked your school to do three things to improve your learning:

- help all of you to make more progress, particularly pupils in Years 3 to 6
- make sure that the work you are given in lessons helps you to learn quickly
- we want your school to concentrate on improving the things that will help you to make more progress.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school.

Yours sincerely

George Crowther

Lead inspector