

Great Harwood St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119421
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327031
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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 aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	147
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 Dion Etheridge (Interim Chair)
Headteacher	Mr Darren Mussell
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St John's Street Great Harwood Blackburn Lancashire BB6 7ES

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2008
Inspection number	327031

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school. It is set in an urban area of Great Harwood and is housed in two separate buildings. Two classes are accommodated in one building, with four classes in the main school building. Around three quarters of the pupils are of White British heritage and a quarter Asian British. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has attained a number of awards, including Healthy Schools and Investors in People. Education is provided for 21 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to improving pupils' achievement and standards, particularly in Key Stage 2.

This is a caring school where pupils are happy. They enjoy positive relationships with the staff and each other. Their personal development and well-being are good and are the strength of the school's work. This is because the school's ethos has focused on the well-being of pupils. However, over time pupils' rates of progress in their learning have declined and standards by the end of Key Stage 2 have dropped to significantly low levels. Consequently, the school's overall effectiveness and value for money are inadequate.

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are close to national expectations but do not achieve as well as they should by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Although pupils make at least satisfactory gains in their learning during Key Stage 1, this rate of progress is not maintained in Key Stage 2. Overall, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006 and 2007 were significantly below the national average. The school's unvalidated results for 2008 indicate similar overall levels of performance, although standards in mathematics have improved. Throughout the school, few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment. School leaders have recognised the need to take action to eliminate the accumulated underachievement, in particular for Key Stage 2 pupils, and have set challenging targets for these pupils. These targets are being supported by action to improve the quality of teaching and are beginning to show some impact.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Positive relationships are evident in most lessons and there are some examples of effective teaching where levels of challenge lead to good progress. However, this is not consistent and teachers' questioning does not always challenge pupils to give reasons for their answers which extend their thinking. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently. The satisfactory curriculum is enhanced by educational visits and visitors to the school and by growing links between the subjects. The school is, rightly, looking to provide pupils with opportunities to put their literacy and numeracy skills into practice in other subjects. The current limited range of such opportunities is one reason why the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 is low. Teachers pay insufficient attention to information they have about how well pupils are doing when they plan lessons and set targets. As a result, tasks do not always challenge pupils of different abilities at the right levels for them to make good progress. Similarly, marking does not always help pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve their work.

Actions taken to raise standards are starting to have an impact because leaders at all levels have correctly identified what needs to be done and have focused the school more securely on raising achievement. Staff have responded well and are working diligently to secure improvements. The first signs of relative success are apparent in last year's improved mathematics results. Governors, in particular, have recognised their responsibility to hold the school to account and are doing so satisfactorily. Secure plans are in place to continue improvement based on more challenging targets and a continuing focus on improving teaching. The

headteacher is aware of the urgency for success and his responsibility for providing his committed and eager staff with clear direction. The restructured leadership team are clear about their responsibilities and demonstrate the necessary capacity to improve the school further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is good. Children enter the Reception class with a range of skills that are below what is usual for their age. There are good procedures for introducing children to school and they settle quickly. A strong feature is the visits made by EYFS staff to the homes of children before they start school enabling children and their families to know the school well. Good teaching helps children to make good progress and develop well. Good assessment procedures are used effectively to identify and address specific learning needs at an early stage and to build successfully on what children can do. Consequently children achieve well. As they enter Year 1 most children are close to the learning goals expected for their age. The school rightly places a strong emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills and promoting good attitudes to school from an early age. Staff take every opportunity to talk to children and encourage them to develop their spoken language skills. The well planned activities and the healthy food on offer in the breakfast club provide a good start to the day. Effective teamwork is a feature of the well led EYFS.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and raise standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the challenge of teaching by using accurate assessments of pupils' progress to plan lessons better matched to pupils' abilities.
- Ensure that marking consistently helps pupils to understand their learning targets and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate overall because pupils in Key Stage 2 do not make the progress of which they are capable. In 2007 the school was in the bottom 1% of schools nationally for progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This poor progress represented substantial underachievement and resulted in exceptionally low standards. In 2008, unvalidated results from national tests show that standards in English and science were similar to the previous year. Standards in mathematics rose because staff were more focused on raising standards in lessons. However, although the school was rightly pleased with improvements in mathematics, results indicate significant underachievement for the more able pupils.

The rate of pupils' progress is too variable across the school. There is evidence of improvement across Key Stage 2 but the picture is not strong enough. This is because the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory rather than good and work is not always well matched to pupils' abilities so they are unable to achieve as well as they should. The school itself has recognised that there is likely to be significant underachievement, in particular for the more able pupils this year. It has therefore set challenging targets for the current Year 6 pupils to achieve in 2009 and the current Year 5 the following year. In Key Stage 1 most pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics and consequently standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average. However, too few pupils attain the higher levels in these subjects. Pupils with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in their learning. This is because, in contrast with the more able, their needs are identified and support is targeted appropriately.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is the strength of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good and enhanced by their good manners and behaviour. They reflect their parents' and carers' views when they report that they enjoy school very much. Their enjoyment is further demonstrated by improved attendance which is now broadly average. Pupils talk confidently to one another and to adults. They have a good understanding of healthy living, including the need to stay safe. They participate in a range of activities including sport. When given opportunities to work in pairs or groups, they do so well. They particularly value the work of the school council which has been successful in securing improvements to the school environment, for example the shelter for younger children. They proudly participate in their 'Eco club'. Pupils' contribution to the life of the school and community is good. They raise money for charity, for example, Cancer Research and the forthcoming collection of coins for 'Share Africa'. Within the school, older pupils act as friends and leaders to younger children, particularly when they move into the main building. The strong personal skills they are developing through such activities mean that, despite unsatisfactory rates of progress in learning, their preparation for future economic well-being is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

During the inspection the teaching observed ranged from satisfactory to good. This range is also evident in pupils' current work. Relationships in lessons between adults and pupils, and between the pupils themselves, are good. The school is taking action to improve the quality of teaching so that children learn at a faster rate. However, there is not enough good teaching to allow pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, to make sufficient progress. One of the key reasons for this is that the work planned for pupils is not accurately matched to their ability. This means that pupils are often insufficiently challenged in lessons. Teachers do not stretch pupils' understanding through probing questions and some of the work is over-directed with little encouragement for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Opportunities for learning are sometimes missed through the poor use of time. Nonetheless, examples of good teaching are evident. For example, in a literacy lesson, the teacher successfully challenged pupils of all abilities to record a variety of investigations by following instructions. The teacher made clear to pupils what they were to do and what they were learning. As a result, progress in this lesson was good. This, however, is not a consistent feature throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets all statutory requirements. It is suitably adapted for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, offering them well targeted support for learning. There is now a stronger focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, planning opportunities for pupils to use their skills in

other subjects, for example, in Years 2 and 3, illustrating their learning about 'Elmer' through writing, pictures and interactive displays. The school has started to link pupils' learning in different subjects together to make it more meaningful. School leaders have now placed achievement more firmly at the heart of the curriculum and, as a result, provision for English and mathematics has improved. While this has contributed to better results in mathematics, there is some way to go before the school fully meets the needs of all pupils and provides sufficient challenge for them to make good progress in their learning. A sound range of extra-curricular activities is provided. Pupils appreciate the visitors to school and the opportunities to visit places of interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This area of the school's work is satisfactory. Safeguarding arrangements meet current government regulations. Children are inducted into the school well and settle quickly. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the care, guidance and support of pupils. Parents and pupils report positively on the approachability of staff throughout the school. When pupils leave for secondary school they are helped to transfer smoothly. The school responds on the first day of pupil absences to improve levels of attendance. Despite the school's best efforts, too many holidays are taken in term time.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early. The special educational needs coordinator ensures they receive appropriate support. However, academic guidance is inconsistent. The marking of pupils' work is sometimes brief and does not always give clear guidance on what must be done to improve. Pupils have individual learning targets but they are not altogether clear what they are or how they are to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

A new senior leadership team was created in January 2008. Members of the team understand what the school needs to achieve, and what they need to do to secure this. For example, raising pupil achievement is now at the centre of plans for improving the school and this is already starting to make a difference to teaching. However, not all teachers have a secure knowledge and the skills in assessing pupils' progress and using the information to plan lessons matched to pupils' abilities. This means that good practice is still not consistent and slows improvements. Staff have responded well to the demands of the raising attainment plan and, as a result, pupils in Key Stage 2 made better progress in mathematics for the first time in three years. Although improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate, the current improvements are now demonstrating satisfactory capacity to improve. This has been rightly identified in their raising attainment plan. The school has set challenging targets and the headteacher has made these clear. The school lies at the heart of its community, providing good opportunities to support pupils' personal development and well being.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	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	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	4
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?	Yes

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Great Harwood St John's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, BB6 7ES.

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed listening to you telling me about your school and was pleased to hear how much you enjoy school. It was lovely to hear you talking about how you are looking after your school environment through your Eco club, and to see how well you all get on together in the playground and around school. I agree with you that your teachers are kind and helpful and that they care for you and listen to what you have to say. You behave well and the school makes sure you are safe. All the staff are helpful if problems arise.

There have been recent improvements in the way that the school is focusing on helping you to achieve well. However, many of you are not being helped to do as well as you could. There are still some important things the school needs to do to help you all to achieve your very best in all your work. As a result, I have said that the school needs something called a 'Notice to Improve'.

This means that inspectors will visit the school again within the next twelve months to check that things are continuing to improve. To help with this I have asked the school to:

- Help you make better progress in your learning, especially English, mathematics and science
- Use information about your progress to plan activities at different levels for different groups within lessons so everyone learns well
- Use marking and learning targets in different ways to help you understand what you need to do to improve.

You can play your part by really trying your best at all times and continuing to enjoy all the opportunities that your school offers you.

Good luck and very best wishes for your future.

Michael Onyon

Lead inspector