

# Accrington St Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119446
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327037
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Sheridan

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	149
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>	Miss Lorna Kenyon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Jill R Strong
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 January 2006
<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>	Devonshire Street Accrington Lancashire BB5 1DW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 232329
<b>Fax number</b>	01254 398502

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 May 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Accrington St Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average and the school has an above average number of pupils with statements of special educational need. The school serves an area of some considerable economic deprivation. The number of children who join or leave the school during their primary years is well above the average. In recent years, the school has received several awards including Investors In People, Activemark, the National Healthy Schools Award, Becta ICT Mark, and the Bronze Eco School Award. There is an after-school club on site which is run by a private provider and was inspected separately by Ofsted.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Accrington St Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School has improved significantly since its last inspection and is now a good school with several outstanding strengths. Pupils thrive in this warm, supportive Christian environment. Almost all the parents who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the school. Parents say that they appreciate the academic and pastoral guidance pupils receive, the strong relationships between staff and pupils and the strength of the leadership. The following comment, made by one parent, was typical of many, 'The school has given my daughter the confidence she needs to move on to secondary education with no worries. For the last three years I have seen the school improve and develop and would recommend an education at St Mary Magdalen's to everyone.'

Focused and visionary leadership has been successful in raising standards in a nurturing, safe environment. The school's self-evaluation is slightly over-optimistic but broadly accurate in identifying positive elements and areas which can be improved. Subject leadership has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Leadership, management and governance overall are good. Leadership has a sound understanding of where they are on their school improvement journey. Substantial improvements made since the last inspection show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Teaching and learning throughout the school have improved since the last inspection and are now consistently good. Pupils are focused and enjoy their learning a great deal. The range of activities offered through the curriculum is outstanding. Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning and enjoy the range of activities, visits and visitors.

Personal development is outstanding. Through the highly effective curriculum and good care, guidance and support, pupils develop personal skills which are exemplary. Pupils behave around school in an extremely calm and sensible manner. Pupils talk and deal with sensitive issues with maturity. They work exceptionally well together, enjoying an atmosphere of trust with enthusiasm. Pupils eagerly embrace the good advice they receive in school about living safe and healthy lives. They make an excellent contribution to the school and local community. Their high interpersonal skills prepare them very effectively for the next stage of their education.

Pupils make good progress in school. From below average starting points, pupils reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils who may be vulnerable in some way are monitored effectively and given the additional support they need to flourish along with their peers. As a result, they make good and sometimes very good progress in their work.

Pupils say they feel safe in school and know that someone will help them if they have a problem. Pupils say that bullying is rare and is always dealt with quickly. In their academic work, pupils know what they do well in their learning and understand what they need to do to improve further.

The school site is small and enclosed with teaching rooms over three floors. Although this presents some challenges in providing an accessible learning environment, work has taken place to improve the general appearance of the building and improve its ease of use for teachers and pupils. Risk assessments ensure the safety of the pupils, but some need to be updated to reflect more accurately the changing nature of the school building and grounds.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children's personal development is outstanding. A vibrant and interesting range of teacher-led and independent activities lead to children making good progress across all areas of learning. Typically, children start Reception with skills well below those generally expected of children of their age. Outcomes in the Reception class have improved over the past two years with children achieving well and now entering Year 1 with broadly average skills and abilities overall.

Children are well cared for in Reception and this leads to a happy and relaxed learning atmosphere. Good attention is paid to ensuring that children are safe and to promoting their welfare. Children grow in confidence and they are willing to make choices. They enjoy their learning a great deal. Behaviour is excellent and children play and work together with maturity and thought for each other. Activities are well matched to children's needs, interests and abilities, particularly indoors. The classroom is an exciting, well organised learning space with a good range of activities, eye-catching displays and good quality resources that are easy for children to access and use independently. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation stage is good.

Outdoor learning is planned each day and children spend time learning outdoors with adult support. Outdoor resources are satisfactory. A range of large equipment is kept in a shed and resources from the classroom are used outside. However, the absence of a dedicated outdoor space means that opportunities for children to play and develop independently and over sustained periods is limited.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Update risk assessments and guidelines to reflect the changing nature of the school building and grounds.
- Create more opportunities for sustained outdoor play in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection when they were below the national average at the end of Year 6. The progress that pupils make has improved throughout the school as a result of improved teaching and an outstanding curriculum. Achievement overall is now good and standards are average.

In 2008, pupils in Year 2 reached below average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this represented good progress for these individual pupils from a very low starting point. Standards are rising in Key Stage 1 and pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving well, although standards remain just below average. Pupils in Year 6 in 2008 made good progress to reach broadly average standards in mathematics, English and science. The present Year 6 pupils have made equally good progress from their starting points and are expected to do equally well.

Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or difficulties receive extra support and achieve in line with their peers. More able pupils make better progress now than they did at the time of the last inspection and their achievement is good.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This is demonstrated through pupils' outstanding attitudes towards each other, their work and their teachers. Pupils learn and grow in a school where they feel safe and thrive as individuals. Pupils express views on ethical issues with clarity using a strong moral code. They understand that doing the right thing is important and talk passionately about how they are responsible for creating a positive school for all to work and learn in. Pupils have a good understanding of their culture and the culture of others. Pupils are interested in learning about the lives of others and embrace difference willingly.

The outstanding behaviour of pupils ensures they stay safe. Inappropriate behaviour is rare. Pupils are polite, courteous, thoughtful and kind to each other. This is the expected culture within the school and pupils rarely 'let the side down'. Pupils take on responsibility willingly, enjoying the range of responsibilities they are given. Attendance is average and improving. The attendance of most pupils is good but a minority of pupils have persistently low attendance.

Pupils understand and articulate well the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They make good choices in school, regularly drink water, enjoy a range of healthy foods and snacks and take part in the outstanding range of activities available that help them keep fit and healthy. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and enjoy school a great deal. Their outstanding personal development prepares pupils effectively for their future lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now consistently good. This has led to improvement in the rates of progress pupils make. Excellent relationships in the classroom form the bedrock of the positive learning environment. Expectations are high. Work is usually, though not always, planned at an appropriately challenging level. Pupils know what is expected of them and teachers skilfully enable each learner to meet their targets by offering timely advice and guidance. A high priority is given to the development of basic skills, most notably writing, within a broad curriculum. Support staff are used well in class and with small groups of pupils to ensure all make good progress. Pupils say that lessons are often fun and interesting.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum is vibrant, varied and adapted extremely well to suit the needs of the pupils. Good attention is paid to promoting basic skills including information and communication technology. Wherever possible, the curriculum is taught through exciting themes that capture pupils' imagination and enhance enjoyment. Out-of-school visits, clubs and visitors abound, enriching learning and enabling the development of personal skills. Themed weeks immerse pupils in their learning. Many opportunities exist for pupils to take an active role within their community both in school and performing with the well respected choir. Pupils enjoy opportunities to learn about other communities in Britain and beyond. The curriculum is very effective in equipping pupils for their roles as responsible citizens.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The school places a very high emphasis on caring for its pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the work it does to develop young people emotionally, academically and morally. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils very well and a bond of trust and mutual respect exists. The school works very effectively with external agencies, including voluntary organisations, the local authority and the church, so that pupils are cared for and supported very effectively. Professionals from other agencies speak very highly of the school and its leaders' ability to clearly identify issues and to take a proactive approach. Professionals say that the school is extremely responsive and receptive to working in partnership.

The school has worked hard to improve the attendance of all pupils. Pupils are in no doubt about the importance of attendance and regular opportunities are provided to reinforce and celebrate good attendance. The school has developed an impressive system to challenge poor attendance and support families. Inspection evidence shows that these efforts are having a positive impact in reducing persistent absenteeism. Inspectors found that pupils are keen to be in school.

Procedures to protect pupils and ensure their safety meet current government guidelines. Risk assessments ensure the safety of the pupils, but some need to be updated to reflect more accurately the changing nature of the school building and grounds. Academic guidance is good. Targets are clearly displayed and most children understand them. Pupils get excellent support so they know what they have to do to improve in their learning. The school is effective in tracking pupils' progress and teachers use this information well to identify pupils who need extra support.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Determined and clearly focused leadership gives the school a very strong sense of purpose, providing staff with the self-confidence and vision to move the school forward. The senior leadership team are relentless in their drive for excellence. They work hard to ensure all staff understand the part they play in this rapidly improving school. There is a tangible sense of team spirit amongst the staff and their success is measured in the improved outcomes seen for pupils. Governance is good. Governors become experts in particular areas so they can provide clear guidance and act as a critical friend to senior leaders. Governors have a clear sense of purpose and vision.

Subject leadership has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Subject leaders have a good understanding of their subjects and how they link with the wider curriculum. They understand how well their subject is doing in the school and have clear action plans to make further improvements.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory. The self-evaluation provided for the inspection focused too heavily on the great improvements since the last inspection rather than considering the position the school finds itself in currently. As a result, the school overestimated its overall effectiveness. That said, managers are able to demonstrate that they have a broadly accurate understanding of where they are on their journey of improvement and the priorities for the future. Governors

support and challenge the school well. Challenging targets are regularly reviewed and mostly met. Community cohesion is good. The school ensures that pupils gain a deepening understanding of citizenship and a good awareness of all major world faiths as well as different national and international communities. Good leadership and management at all levels impact well on pupils' good achievement and excellent personal development.



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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?	1
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	3
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

<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>	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	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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## 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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Accrington St Mary Magdalen's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, BB5 1DW

You may remember that I came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you about what I found. I found that yours is a good school and some parts of it are outstanding.

Many of you told me how much you enjoy school. I can well see why. Your school provides you with a lot of things to do. Your school is very good at helping you to prepare for adult life. I saw that you are incredibly polite and well behaved. You care for each other and you all help to make your school a really welcoming place to be. Well done.

I found that you are doing well in your learning. Because you work hard and your teachers teach you well, you are making good progress in English and mathematics and science.

I could see that you are safe in school. This is because your behaviour is very good and your teachers take good care of you. I have to say that your building is a difficult one to get around; it was built such a long time ago. It is important that you move around your building carefully. I have asked your school to make sure they have written instructions so that everyone knows how to use your building safely.

- I found that in the Reception class there were a lot of activities and children seemed to enjoy their learning. I was particularly impressed to see how well children in Reception used equipment like computers and digital cameras without the teacher's help. Children in Reception go outside most days for some of their learning. However, it is difficult for them because all of their equipment has to be packed away. I have asked your school to provide a space outside that only Reception children use to allow them to learn and play outside with equipment that they can choose for themselves.

I would like to thank all those of you who spoke with me. I found you all to have fantastic manners and wonderful behaviour. You are a credit to your parents/carers and your school. I wish you all the best.

Yours faithfully

Michael Sheridan

Lead inspector