

Haslingden St James Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119452
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327038
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Eric Jackson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	190
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	Rvd Roger Smith
Headteacher	Mr John Nuttall
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	Regent Street Haslingden Rossendale Lancashire BB4 5HL

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Inspection number	327038

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school that serves an area of high socio-economic deprivation. A high proportion of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. About 70% of the pupils are of Bangladeshi or Pakistani heritage. Some of the pupils are bi-lingual or multi-lingual, but significant proportions of them have little knowledge of English at entry. A smaller than average percentage of pupils is identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides education for 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: 2

This is a good school that serves its mixed community well. Parents overwhelmingly support the staff and recognise their high quality care and support, ensuring that pupils feel safe and happy. The pupils' good attendance and the absence of racial incidents or exclusions, alongside the pupils' excellent behaviour, show how effective the school's motto is, 'that all will be friends'. One parent described how her child, a school refuser elsewhere, settled quickly here, now loves school, and is making rapid progress in learning. Many parents attended this school themselves, and value the importance it places on shared values of community, harmony, equality and tolerance. This is reflected in the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils are safe and well cared for: all required safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place. Pupils develop their personal skills well, taking on the messages about keeping safe and living healthy lifestyles, testified by the school's Healthy School Award. For example, at the request of the school council, a salad bar was introduced to the lunchtime menu. Pupils look after one another and are adamant that there is no bullying. There are good opportunities to take responsibility within school, which children do with confidence and reliability. Older pupils care for those who are younger at play and lunchtimes, and have important roles across the school. Pupils collect and collate daily the complex lunch choices from each class, and being asked if they ever make mistakes, they replied assuredly, 'No!' Pupils learn the value of working and living together in varied communities well, both from the staff's example, and from the strong and trusted links established with a wide range of outside agencies and community groups. It is clear the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

The school's warm and friendly atmosphere contributes well to pupils' good progress in their academic as well as their personal development. This prepares them well for the next stage of their lives. Pupils say that they 'love it here', and that the staff 'really help them' to understand how to learn and make progress. This is shown by their good progress from well below what is typical when they start school, to broadly expected levels in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) when they leave. Standards have risen and achievement has improved well over the last two years. This is because the pupils' learning is generally supported well by good teaching, support and guidance. However, there are times when teachers do not always make effective use of support staff to help all pupils learn. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as do those learning English as an additional language.

The satisfactory curriculum meets requirements. The school is keen to make it more responsive to pupils' needs and has bid for a place in a new project called Creative Partnerships. Staff are currently seeking ways to link pupils' learning more effectively between subjects. There are already good examples of learning in reading and writing being exploited through history, geography and religious education. There is a strong and effective focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, with an emphasis on experimental science currently. However, pupils' early mathematical learning is based too much on abstract ideas with insufficient practical investigation using equipment and games to consolidate their understanding. There are good enrichment opportunities through visits, visitors and clubs, some thoughtfully run at lunchtime to cater for children who go to the Mosque after school.

The school is led and managed effectively. The experienced headteacher knows the children and their families well, and sets high expectations for the quality of provision. He works closely

with the experienced chair of governors. Other senior leaders perform their duties effectively, and are keen to continue ongoing developments in the use of assessment to aid pupils' learning, and the EYFS. The outcomes of the monitoring and review of the school's work lead to accurate self-evaluation. Although the planned direction for improvement is clear in practice, it is not always clearly expressed in school documents. Nonetheless, the school is forward-looking, and is well placed to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is good. The children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress from generally well below starting points typically. They achieve well, especially in developing speaking and listening skills and in their personal development. They improve enough to join Year 1 with skills which are below average. The staff provide a good range of activities that encourage children to explore their environment and develop their learning, particularly so in the Nursery. Creatively, the staff adapted their planning well to take advantage of a heavy snowfall to give children exciting and unusual first-hand experiences. The EYFS is led and managed well, and care and welfare are outstanding. Parents recognise how effectively the staff get to know and look after their children. Behaviour is good, and children enjoy the choice of activities, especially when they can develop their own ideas. For example, a group of children played well in the 'shop', discussing between them who should play which role.

What the school should do to improve further

- Manage the deployment of support staff more effectively in order for them to support all pupils' learning.
- Reinforce the pupils' developing mathematical understanding with a wide range of practical activities and first-hand experiences.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good across the school. From well below the typically expected starting points, they make good progress to reach broadly average standards by Year 6. Teacher assessments and results of national tests at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 show a rising trend over recent years and are now broadly average. Pupils successfully make progress in English across the school because the staff are dedicated to help them learn to listen carefully, speak clearly and learn to read and write securely. Recent changes to the teaching of literacy have accelerated their development of a wider and richer vocabulary well. For example, Year 3 pupils use and understand such terms as onomatopoeia and alliteration effectively in their writing. There is a timely focus on experimental science, and the school has recognised the need to improve progress in mathematics by giving younger pupils more practical tasks. ICT skills are developed well through the school's rich resources, and school data indicate that pupils are expected to attain expected levels in other subjects. A local authority survey complimented the school on the quality of the pupils' work in design and technology, and samples of their work in art and design confirm the school's judgements.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language make good progress because of good systems to identify and provide for their individual needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They are polite, well-mannered and care for each other as friends across all the school's community. Their behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school, a feature commented on regularly by visitors. The school is a safe and welcoming place, and pupils really enjoy their time here. Pupils know how to live a healthy lifestyle, and take up the various sporting opportunities to keep fit. Because the staff work well with parents, there is a shared feeling of working together in a common cause, despite the varied backgrounds and cultures of the local community. Pupils reflect this feeling strongly in the school, and learn effectively how their community is part of Britain and the wider world communities. They are prepared well for their future lives by the time they leave.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, leading to good progress for all the different groups of pupils. There is no inadequate teaching, and occasionally it is outstanding. Teachers plan their lessons effectively, although they do not always make best use of the time available for support staff to work with pupils. Staff deployment is at its best in the EYFS. Pupils generally concentrate well and their behaviour is outstanding. This contributes well to their good progress. They say that their work varies from hard to 'easy-peasy', but that there is always someone to help them if they are stuck. In mathematics, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to learn from first-hand experiences or to use a range of resources. Year 6 pupils have been trained in thorough self-assessment techniques and apply them very well in checking their own and other pupils' work. This is a school focus for development, and teachers' marking and assessment is generally good, though variable between classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It covers all required elements, and staff plan their lessons effectively. There is the expected concentration on core subjects, and ICT has a good place in pupils' learning. The staff are developing new approaches to discover how pupils' learning across subjects and their skills can be best promoted. However, this is at an early stage. There are encouraging signs of improvements in pupils' opportunities to investigate in science, but this is not yet extended enough into mathematics. The curriculum is enriched effectively through visits, after-school clubs and other sporting opportunities. It was good to see that staff quickly adapted some learning activities in response to a heavy snowfall, and gave the pupils a chance to play in the snow at lunchtime if they wanted. This spontaneity is a good feature of the school's view of pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. All required safety, safeguarding and child protection measures are in place, and staff training is up to date. The staff show a high level of commitment to the pupils, and working relationships are good. Parents appreciate how well the school keeps

them informed about their children's well-being and progress in school. Pupils recognise that the staff are always at hand to help them if needed. This occasionally limits pupils' opportunities for independence and to solve problems for themselves. However, the support for pupils needing help to learn English as an additional language is very effective so by the time they are in Year 6, most pupils speak English fluently. There are good systems to identify pupils needing extra support, and this is provided effectively. Academic guidance is good, and most pupils know what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership is good and the school is well managed, running smoothly day to day.

The headteacher has established good working relationships between all those who work in the school, and with the local and wider communities. Parents trust the school, and their trust is repaid in their children's good personal and academic progress and there is clear equality of opportunity for all. The recently appointed deputy headteacher leads the teaching team well, and is helping other staff to develop improved assessment procedures. Other senior staff also promote improvement effectively, such as in raising attainment in Key Stage 1, and the development of new EYFS practice. There are effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work, although written summaries of these are not always clear. Governors are kept well informed, and a number of them are active in the school. They both support and challenge the school effectively. One area that has not been rigorously checked is in the most effective way to deploy the many support staff in support of pupils' learning. These staff work hard, but are not always engaged with pupils when they could be making a good contribution to their learning. Nevertheless the school overall provides good 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?	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?	2
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?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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?	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**

4 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Haslingden St James Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, BB4 5HL

It was good to meet you in your school. I remember how polite you are, and how well you welcome visitors. You may remember that we came to check how well your school helps you to learn and grow.

You and your parents told us that St James' is a good school where you all get on well together. Please thank your parents for sending back our questionnaires. We agree with you all. It is a good school, and it helps you to make good progress in your lessons and in how you behave and work together as a happy and friendly community.

We thought that you behaved excellently, and know that was not just because we were there! Even though you were excited by the heavy snowfall, you got on with your work very well. I was impressed by how sensibly you took part in the concert rehearsals, even when it was not your turn to do anything.

The staff are thinking of ways to help you progress even quicker. They are going to give you more chance to play with mathematical games and equipment to help you learn better. They are also going to plan new ways for adults to support you in groups or on your own when you need specific help.

You can help by continuing to behave so well, attending school regularly, and joining in the many things there are to do with your usual cheerfulness and friendly attitudes.

We wish you well for a good Christmas holiday, and for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

Mr E Jackson

Lead inspector