

# Chorley St James Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119467
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327042
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Scott

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	195
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>	Mr Mick Fowler
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 May 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>	Devonport Way Chorley Lancashire PR6 0TE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01257 264638

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	327042

**Fax number**

01257 277196

<b>Age group</b>	3-11
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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 in an urban setting. Most pupils come from White British families, but a few come from minority ethnic groups, especially Asian British families. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, but there is a high proportion of pupils with a statement of special need. Socio-economic conditions in the catchment area are slightly below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Its strong Christian values pervade the school and creates a welcoming and caring environment for pupils. The pastoral care is good throughout the school so pupils understandably feel not only safe, but valued and respected. In addition, their attitudes to learning and personal development are good. Good spiritual development enhances their self-esteem, behaviour is good and social interaction is excellent. Older pupils automatically look after younger ones; indeed, the salad sandwiches that one junior class were making in a design technology lesson were destined in part for Reception children. Although the response to the questionnaires was low, those parents that expressed views were nearly all complimentary. 'Our children have developed in many ways – socially, emotionally and, of course, educationally,' was a typical comment.

Pupils' academic achievement is not as good as their personal development at present. Their progress through the school is satisfactory, reflecting the quality of teaching. From below average starting points, pupils tend to leave at Year 6 with average attainment in the main subjects. A recent decline in standards by Year 2, due mainly to movement within the pupil population and proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, has been halted. Staff changes are proving beneficial and the school has instigated a new style of curriculum. At Year 6, standards dropped after the last inspection but have rallied. They were average in 2008 and indications are that they will be similar this year. However, there are still comparative weaknesses in mathematics and writing that the school has not fully addressed. In addition, more able pupils do not achieve as well as they might.

Although teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory, they are not tailored and stimulating enough to provide consistently good challenge for all pupils. Teachers do not make the best use of assessment data to guide their planning. Sometimes, especially in Key Stage 2, lessons are too formal and work is too similar for pupils to have the scope to work at their own pace, particularly more able pupils. Even so, classrooms are positive places and pupils are eager to learn. They are clear about what they need to learn and benefit from good guidance from all adults during lessons. Marking is less effective and does not provide a consistently clear indication to pupils as to how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The calm, assertive leadership of the headteacher gives the school a good sense of direction and assures its aim to provide 'a secure, caring and stimulating environment, within a Christian context'. Leaders at all levels, including governors, are supportive and hard-working but do not monitor the school's development rigorously enough. This has been partly responsible for the dips in standards. Self-evaluation is not rigorous enough. However, some of their actions have been successful, such as the reduction of inequalities in the achievements of boys and girls. Therefore, the school is demonstrating satisfactory capacity to improve further and currently provides satisfactory value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children benefit from a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. Parents are appreciative of the sensitive way that their children are introduced to school. Staff take good care of children, are alert to their needs and respond efficiently to any concerns they may have. The focus on social and emotional development ensures that pupils of all backgrounds

interact well. As a result, children make good progress in their personal development and thoroughly enjoy their time in these classes. One said that 'this is the best school ever'.

Children start school with skills and abilities that are lower than those typical of three-year-olds, especially in language. They achieve well over the two years and move into Key Stage 1 with attainment in line with national expectations. This is because of good teaching, including the provision for letter sounds which is beginning to have an impact on literacy skills. Staff have a good understanding of the learning needs of children of this age and provide a good blend of guided and independent activities. Staff assess children's progress continuously but this knowledge is not always used to best effect in teaching to maximise learning. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and has been successful in improving the transition of children into Key Stage 1.

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

- Use assessment data more effectively to ensure that lessons are consistently challenging for pupils of all abilities, especially the more able.
- Develop a more creative and stimulating curriculum in all subjects to improve learning in the core subjects, especially writing and mathematics.
- Improve academic guidance, especially marking, so that pupils are much more aware of how to improve their basic skills.
- Ensure that self-evaluation and monitoring procedures are more rigorous so that the school's development is more effective and sustained.

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

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average by Year 6. Pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are average. Usually, standards are average by the end of Year 2 but have been declining; in 2008, standards dipped sharply. This is explained mainly by the unusually high incidence of pupils who have special educational needs and also by the adverse impact of movement within the pupil population. This year, pupils in Year 2 are on track to reach broadly average standards in reading and mathematics, but not in writing. Writing is a relative weakness through the school; not enough has been done to improve expression, vocabulary, spelling and handwriting, in particular.

Standards by Year 6 fell in 2006 but have been improving and were broadly average in 2008. Staffing changes are consolidating the improvement and standards remain broadly average in the current Year 6, notably in English and science. Throughout the school, too few of the more able pupils reach the higher levels of the national tests, thus depressing the overall results. The school has successfully addressed the underachievement by girls in mathematics; there are no other significant disparities between groups of pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language achieve on a par with other pupils.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils generally behave well, and are polite and at ease with adults. Their enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their improving attendance. Good attitudes to learning are sometimes tempered by lapses in concentration and presentation. Their enthusiastic yet reflective participation in uplifting assemblies shows a maturity for their years and fosters a sense of togetherness. Pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and other faiths, and have close links with the church and local community; they are less aware of the diverse cultures in Britain and beyond.

Their social development is impressive. There are no barriers between pupils; good behaviour and courtesy are the norm. They show kindness to one another around school and know how to keep themselves safe. The school council plays a key role in the school's development, and pupils know that their voice matters. They are increasingly knowledgeable and self-reliant in adopting a healthy lifestyle; they grow their own vegetables in the school garden and play energetically outside. Even though some basic skills could be stronger, their all-round abilities and social awareness stand them in good stead for the future.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is some good practice especially in Key Stage 1. In most lessons, teachers generate a positive atmosphere and there is a clear focus upon learning. As a result, pupils concentrate well and know precisely what they have to learn. Good questioning by staff enables them to assess pupils' understanding and encourage them to reflect on their learning. Less secure pupils do not always play a full role, especially because teaching assistants are not proactive enough during whole-class sessions. However, reassuring and helpful guidance is on hand in group activities which promotes learning.

Teachers' planning reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum but does not take enough account of the different needs of pupils. Work is usually differentiated but teachers do not use assessment data sufficiently to fully challenge all pupils. In particular, more able pupils do not have enough scope to learn at their own speed. Teachers are not always insistent enough about a good pace to learning and care with presentation, so work is sometimes incomplete and untidy. Marking is supportive and gives some helpful advice but teachers are not rigorous about ensuring that pupils learn from it.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school has a satisfactory curriculum. There is a clear emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills and the school is keen to develop these further in Key Stage 2 through more creative activities especially in writing and mathematics. This is working partially, although not all lessons routinely reflect this approach. The school has yet to evaluate the impact of its decision to introduce an activity-based curriculum throughout Key Stage 1. Intervention classes to boost pupils' achievement, for example, in mathematics, have been successful. A good range of activities after school, such as cookery, basketball and a Bible club, broaden pupils' experiences.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory, and sometimes good. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is satisfactory; they have limited scope to extend their abilities, although good opportunities exist in the performing arts. Personal, social and health education is good. In addition to formal lessons, staff are adept at boosting pupils' self-confidence and making them aware of their social responsibilities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

A very supportive ethos enables each pupil to learn in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust. Overall care for pupils is good. Safeguarding procedures are in place and the school works well with external agencies to provide specialist help to more vulnerable pupils and those with specific needs. Pupils feel safe in school, and, if a problem arises, know that there is always an adult to rely on. Good relationships with parents and carers help to reinforce this mantle of care.

While effective systems are in place to track pupils' progress over time, teachers do not use the resultant information enough to influence their teaching and the curriculum. Pupils know what they need to learn in lessons, but do not clearly understand how they, as individuals, can improve their work. Teachers sometimes give written advice but are not insistent enough that pupils respond to it.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management are satisfactory at all levels. The caring and dedicated leadership of the headteacher is a particular strength and ensures that the school is maintaining its Christian influences and strong family ethos. Parents appreciate the care that staff take of their children. The school has suffered a slight decline in standards since the last inspection but the leadership's actions have proved effective in part. For example, staffing changes and focused support have improved standards in Key Stage 2; there is no longer an issue about girls' performance in mathematics.

However, not all issues have been successfully addressed. Some weaknesses in teaching, assessment and academic guidance persist because the school's self-evaluation is not as rigorous as it could be. Governors and senior staff have a slightly generous view of the school's provision and action plans to overcome shortcomings are not monitored consistently enough to ensure complete success. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. The sense of community within the school and the locality is good, but it is less apparent in the wider world. The school is currently formulating an overall plan of action.



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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?	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

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?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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>	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

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

1 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chorley St James' Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, PR6 0TE

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school and to share our thoughts on what we found. Mr Massey and I enjoyed our discussions with you. Your opinions helped us to get to know your school better.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. It is a caring place, and we were struck by the calm, Christian atmosphere that influences all that you and the staff do. You certainly develop well as individuals. You get on well together, you are considerate and you are learning how to make important life choices for yourselves, for example in following a healthy lifestyle. You contribute well to the school and local communities but would benefit from more links with the wider world.

You have a good start to school life in the Nursery and Reception classes. By Year 6, your standards of work are typical for your age and your progress is satisfactory, although your writing and mathematics are not quite as good as they could be. In addition, those of you who find work too easy do not make the progress you should. Teaching is satisfactory and better when it makes lessons very interesting and expects a good pace of work from you. Staff give you good support in lessons but do not always make clear enough how you can improve your work.

Your headteacher and all staff work hard on your behalf and have made some good improvements. We feel, though, there are several things that the school could do to become better. We would like your work to always be as interesting and challenging, as possible, so that standards in writing and mathematics can improve and that the more capable of you can make better progress. We are also asking that you are given more helpful advice about how you can make your work better. Finally, we have asked the school to double check that all its work has the best possible outcomes for you.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead inspector