

Parbold Douglas Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119494
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327051
Inspection date	14 January 2009
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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	191
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	Dr Brian McGucken
Headteacher	Mr Paul Smith
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	Lancaster Lane Parbold Wigan Lancashire WN8 7HS

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	14 January 2009
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Telephone number
Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those in Key Stage 1 with a statement of special educational need
- the provision for able, gifted and talented pupils
- how well the school promotes pupils' independence in learning.

The inspectors gathered evidence from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, parents and carers' questionnaires, assessment information, documents, interviews and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving an affluent catchment area. It makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Almost all the pupils are White British with a very small percentage of pupils of minority ethnic or mixed heritage. All pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but there is an above average proportion with a statement of special educational need. Due to flooding, the Reception class was temporarily using the information and communication technology (ICT) suite as its base. There was also extensive building work taking place.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent education for its pupils, enhanced by very effective links with parents and reflecting positively the school's Christian ethos. Governors are rightly very pleased with the very effective way in which the headteacher has skilfully tightened and built on the existing procedures to lead the school into being outstanding.

There is a secure, caring, inclusive and welcoming environment, with all required safeguarding and child protection measures in place. The staff have maintained the strengths from the last inspection, and have responded energetically to the purposeful vision and drive of the recently established leadership team. Achievement is excellent. The better than typical levels of development of children starting school are successfully extended as pupils move through the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach exceptionally high standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Results in national tests are significantly above average. Pupils make excellent progress in their learning in each key stage, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, because the teaching is never less than good and is often outstanding. A parent wrote, 'The staff have supported my child's learning difficulties and tailored the teaching to enable him to reach his true potential.' Those children identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, are very well supported across the school, often by skilled teaching assistants, and make excellent progress towards the targets set for them.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are promoted extremely well so that they transfer to secondary school extremely well equipped for the next stage of their lives. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also of a very high standard, having improved since the last inspection with a greater appreciation and understanding of the wide variety of cultures in Britain and the rest of the world. This typifies the strong and effective links established with local, national and international groups that supports the development of community cohesion outstandingly. Pupils show in their acceptance of responsibility and their friendliness and care for each other that they know how to contribute as members of a complex community.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly recognise how well the staff challenge and support their children to achieve to their capabilities, including in their excellent behaviour and understanding of healthy lifestyles. The many written comments echo the views of parents and carers who said that their children love the school, enjoy all the opportunities provided, and have exceeded their expectations in their all-round development. One parent summarised the views of many in writing, 'Everyone works hard to make sure every child feels safe, secure and confident in their learning. The school is simply superb!'

The pupils also appreciate how well the staff encourage them to 'aim high' and give them such a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills, abilities and independence. Personal and academic care, guidance and support are excellent. Pupils are helped to understand how well they have achieved and how to improve further through discussion and marking of their work. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are expected to assess and comment on their own and other pupils' work, and they do so very competently for their age. Those identified as able, gifted or talented are challenged effectively, which is an improvement since the last inspection. For example, high attaining Year 2 pupils responded successfully to the request to replace words with their antonyms accurately and in context.

The curriculum is very well planned in its coverage of the core subjects and information and communication technology (ICT). It also has strong features to support the creative arts and physical development, recognised in the achievement of national awards through the Artsmark and the Activemark. Most of the non-core subjects are taught separately and this limits pupils' opportunities to transfer their skills from one area of learning to another. The leadership team rightly feel that it is time to review the curriculum in order to establish more effective links between subjects to help pupils to connect aspects of their learning more coherently. There have been exciting and potentially excellent initiatives taken in teaching Spanish across the school, 'thinking skills' in Year 6, and for all pupils in Year 5 to learn the clarinet. The wider enrichment of the curriculum through specialist music sessions, after-school clubs, visits and visitors, residential trips and links with children in different countries also adds an extra dimension to pupils' learning. There is effective wrap-around care provided before and after school, much welcomed by parents and pupils.

The last inspection recognised the strengths in leadership and management, and these have been further improved recently with the establishment of a reorganised senior team under the recently appointed headteacher. This has brought new dynamism into the striving for excellence and in consolidating and shaping sharply the direction of the school. Parents and carers are very satisfied that the school's reputation and ethos have been maintained and further improved in the last 18 months. They comment very favourably on recent upgrades to the inside and outside learning environment, for example, and recognise the dedicated contribution of all the staff. The school knows itself well and monitoring and evaluation procedures are robust and accurate. Governance is excellent, and the chair and other governors are knowledgeable about the school, supporting and challenging the staff very effectively. Governors make sure that the best possible value is gained from the budget. The capacity to keep on improving is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The inspection coincided with a disruptive period for the Reception class. Having been flooded out of their own room, to a completely differently organised and formally furnished setting in the ICT suite, it might have been that aspects of EYFS practice were curtailed for the time being. This is far from the case, and the EYFS leader and staff have worked successfully to provide as seamless a transition as possible. Parents praise the staff both for their careful induction procedures, and their adaptability. Even in these circumstances, children are making good progress in all the areas of learning, and very good progress in their personal development, independence and use of language. There is real strength in the level of care and focus on children's welfare in this difficult situation. Despite the limitations, such as being unable to access the outdoor provision whilst restoration work is underway, there is no reason to doubt the school's judgement that provision is outstanding. Teachers' planning shows an imaginative approach to all the areas of learning, and very well kept assessment records testify to excellent progress in learning from levels above what is typical at entry. Children reach well above average levels in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve the curriculum by developing links between different subjects so that pupils' skills are used more effectively across all areas of learning.

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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?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	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	2
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

14 January 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Parbold Douglas Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, WN8 7HS

Mr Yates and I would like to thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we inspected your school.

You will remember that we came to check how well Parbold Douglas helps you to learn and grow. You and your parents told us that you think it is a fantastic school where you feel very happy and really enjoy what is offered by the staff. (Please thank your parents on our behalf for the impressive return of the questionnaires sent to them.)

We agree with you and them, and feel that your school provides an outstanding education for you. This shows in how well you behave, your friendliness to visitors and each other, and in how well you learn and the high standards you reach. Congratulations to all of you for your contribution to helping us make our judgement. Those of you on the school council and the 'Big Cheeses' also helped us by giving us their views.

We know that your school is extremely well led, that the staff have high expectations for your development and that you have a great range of activities and tasks to help you make such good progress. So, it is also congratulations to the staff and to your parents who give you and the school so much help.

Your school is not one that stands still, but is always looking for ways to help you make better progress in your learning. Your teachers are going to look at how they teach the different subjects. They are going to try to find links in learning between the subjects so that you can use skills learned in one area to learn more effectively in another. You already do some of this with reading, writing and ICT skills.

With best wishes for your futures, wherever they may take you!

Yours faithfully

Eric Jackson

Lead inspector