

Overton St Helen's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 119539 |
| Local Authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 327063 |
| Inspection dates | 18–19 June 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | David Edwards |

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) | 168 |
| 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 | Mrs Gill Gardner |
| Headteacher | Mrs Sammy Clarke |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Lancaster Road Overton Morecambe Lancashire LA3 3EZ |

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
| Inspection dates | 18–19 June 2009 |
| Inspection number | 327063 |

Telephone number
Fax number

01524 858615
01524 858615

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 4-11 |
| Inspection dates | 18-19 June 2009 |
| Inspection number | 327063 |

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. It has one Reception class. The proportion of pupils eligible to take a free school meal is significantly lower than found nationally. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is marginally lower than the national average. The school has achieved a number of awards including Healthy School status, the Race Equality Mark and the Eco Bronze award. A parallel Religious Education inspection took place at the same time as the section 5 inspection; the findings of this will be reported separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. Since the last inspection, improvements to the provision of care, guidance and support have had a positive influence on pupils' personal development. The vast majority of parents who returned inspection questionnaires are happy with the school. One wrote, 'This is a very caring, welcoming school with a strong family ethos and Christian values in which all individuals are valued'. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has created an effective leadership team which has a clear vision for the school's future. It has begun to improve further the quality of teaching and learning.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average in Year 2 and Year 6. Until recently, there has been some underachievement at Key Stage 2 in English and in writing across the whole school because of insufficient challenge in some classes. However, pupils' progress is accelerating following improvements in academic guidance and higher expectations by teachers. As a result, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to meet improved standards and achievement. Teaching is satisfactory but there are some inconsistencies; for example, more able pupils are not fully challenged in all lessons and in some classes pupils are not fully involved in learning. Good lessons are lively, stimulating and challenging.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their moral, social and cultural development, are good. Their spiritual development is outstanding. High standards of personal care and support for each individual reflect the strong Christian teaching that permeates the school. Good behaviour is sustained at all times and contributes to effective learning. Care, guidance and support are good, but could be better still if information from assessment procedures was used consistently by all teachers to plan challenging work for more able pupils. Members of staff sensitively meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils enjoy school and say they feel safe. If a problem occurs, they know that teachers will listen to and act upon their concerns. They know the importance of making healthy eating choices and the need to take regular exercise.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is generally well-planned. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of key skills such as information and communication technology (ICT) through practical, first-hand experiences. Pupils are immersed in a wide variety of activities linked to the local community and to forging links with the wider community in Britain, for example, through excellent links with a predominantly Muslim school in Preston. The school's teaching and curriculum are increasing pupils' understanding of other lives and cultures around the world, particularly through links with projects in India and Africa. These help pupils to value diversity and to promote shared values; they lead to excellent community cohesion. A structured plan of action for community cohesion and race equality is linked well to priorities in the school development plan.

Decisive action taken by the leadership team and supported by staff, parents and the governing body has brought about improvements in teaching and learning and the assessment of pupils' progress. The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. They make sound gains in

their learning given their capabilities and starting points. When they leave Reception, their learning and skills are broadly as expected at the start of Year 1. Their personal development is satisfactory. Children know about healthy foods and are encouraged to have good habits of personal hygiene. Most children are cooperative and can work alone but a small minority of boys have difficulty playing sensibly and responsibly on their own; occasionally they do not respect each other's right to be heard and shout out at inappropriate times. Children from different backgrounds and cultures play and work in harmony.

Teaching and children's learning are satisfactory. There is a reasonable balance between activities led by an adult and those that children choose for themselves. Play activities form part of every lesson but sometimes they lack structure, purpose and appropriate challenge so that too little learning takes place. This is particularly true of provision for outdoor play.

Provision for children's welfare is good. Relationships between adults and children are good so children feel safe and develop self-confidence. Leadership and management of the provision are satisfactory. Adults are highly committed and are good role models for children. There are not always sufficient opportunities for the team of adults to meet and plan together. Links with pre-school providers are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by planning more opportunities for creative, structured and challenging play, particularly in the outdoor area.
- Raise standards in English in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that more pupils achieve the higher levels, particularly in writing.
- Raise the expectations of all teachers to provide challenging work in lessons for all groups of pupils, but particularly for more able pupils.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 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

The achievement of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory; standards are broadly average. Pupils' results in the national tests taken in Year 6 in 2008 were average in English and science and well above average in mathematics. The better results in mathematics were due to stronger teaching and greater challenge in lessons in upper Key Stage 2 classes. Pupils' results in reading were good but those in writing were below average. Given pupils' starting points in Year 1, these results represent satisfactory achievement for most pupils. More able pupils underachieved however, particularly in English. Overall, pupils did not achieve as well as pupils nationally in English and science. Information from assessment procedures indicates that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve slightly higher standards.

In the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2008, pupils' attainment was above average. The proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age was broadly average in mathematics but below average in English. Writing was weaker than reading. Pupils in the current Year 2 are on track to achieve challenging targets and higher standards, especially in mathematics. Throughout the school, improvements in teaching and learning are resulting in rising standards and better progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their moral, social and cultural development, is good. Their spiritual development, fostered in collective worship and in the excellent relationships that exist throughout the school, is outstanding. Attitudes to school are good and pupils make a strong contribution to the smooth running of the school, for example, as school councillors, house captains, or young leaders. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is good. There have been no exclusions for the past 15 years. Pupils say there is very little, if any, bullying. Year 6 buddies provide support and reassurance to infant children. Pupils say they enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. They understand the advantages of a healthy lifestyle through sensible diet and regular exercise. They learn how to stay safe through, for example, the 'Jugs and Herrings' exercise which educates them about the dangers of drug abuse. The development of pupils' qualities of tolerance of others, and their understanding of issues relating to minority groups, particularly minority ethnic groups, is outstanding. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school's link with a predominantly Asian school in Preston. Preparation for the next stage of learning is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is some good teaching in the school but it has not been consistent enough over time to enable pupils to achieve well. In all lessons, relationships are very supportive and provide pupils with encouragement and motivation. ICT is used effectively to present lessons in interesting ways. In the better lessons, teaching is energetic and enthusiastic. There is a good pace to the learning and activities challenge the different ability groups, particularly more able pupils. This is not a feature of all lessons. Sometimes the work set for more able pupils is too easy for them and teachers' questioning does not probe deep enough, particularly in English. Marking is good. It helps pupils know how to improve their work and sets targets for further improvement. Teaching assistants are generally well deployed to support the learning of lower attaining groups and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The use of information from assessment procedures is improving. It is leading to accelerated progress, particularly at upper Key Stage 2, and erasing the legacy of underachievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met. Good curriculum links exist with local secondary schools to support pupils' learning through specialist teaching in French, and through mathematics workshops and sports partnerships. A good range of well attended after-school activities supports pupils' development, especially in sport. The curriculum is further enhanced by an excellent range of educational visits out of school, including residential outdoor activities and visitors to the school, such as theatre companies, dancers, wildlife experts and artists. Themed weeks such as a geography week and 'Stories round the World' week, add to pupils' enjoyment and extend their knowledge and understanding of other places and cultures. Provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good with some very strong features. Parents appreciate the good support which the school provides and trust the school to look after their children. Members of staff are caring and know their pupils well. Good links are established with outside agencies. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and any pupils at risk are quickly identified and supported. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met by skilled teaching and teaching assistant support, which helps them to make satisfactory progress. The induction arrangements are good for pupils entering school and as they move through primary school into high school. Academic guidance has improved substantially since the last inspection and is good. Pupils know and understand what to do to reach the challenging targets set for them. Marking celebrates pupils' achievements and sets out the next steps in learning. This is accelerating pupils' progress. There remains, however, a lack of challenge for more able pupils in some classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher on community cohesion and race equality is outstanding. The headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear focus on raising standards. Leaders have successfully tackled identified weaknesses and improvements are evident, particularly in mathematics. The school data and work samples seen during the inspection indicate that standards are beginning to rise in writing too. Overall, the school is working successfully to erase the legacy of underachievement at Key Stage 2. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school has a reasonably accurate view of its own performance, although it is overgenerous in some judgements of its effectiveness. The main reason for this is that monitoring and evaluation are not always rigorous enough. For example, the school's view of the quality of teaching is based too much on what teachers plan and do, and not enough on what pupils do and learn. As a result, monitoring of key areas is not yet sufficiently effective to raise standards at a more rapid rate.

Governors are supportive of the school. They challenge its actions and hold leaders to account. The school's contribution to community cohesion is outstanding. Planning for this important aspect of the school's work is sharp and well focused. It has a significant impact upon learners' levels of understanding of local, national and global issues and of cultural diversity.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|--|-----------------------|

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? | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 3 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 3 |

Achievement and standards

| | |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ 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 |

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 | 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 | 2 |

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? | 2 |

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 | 2 |
| 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? | 1 |
| 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

22 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Overton St Helen's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, LA3 3EZ

Thank you for making Mr Clark and me so welcome and helping us to find out all about your school. It was a delight to be with you and to see your bright smiles. We were pleased to see how well behaved you are and how kind and considerate you are to each other.

I am writing to tell you about the findings of the inspection.

Overton St Helen's provides a satisfactory standard of education and is an improving school. We agree with you that your headteacher and all staff are very caring and help you if you have a problem or personal issue. You have very positive attitudes towards the staff and you respect each other. Your behaviour in lessons was good. You impressed us by knowing so much about staying safe and being healthy. Your knowledge and understanding of how to work effectively with your local community, the wider community in Britain and around the world are some of the best we have seen.

We saw that the younger children settled into the Reception class well and enjoyed school life. We felt however, that the outdoor play activities could be better planned.

The school is providing you with an interesting curriculum and we saw evidence that standards of work are rising. Some of you are not yet achieving your best though, particularly in writing. To improve your work further we have suggested that your teachers set more challenging work in lessons for those of you who find some of the work too easy. In addition, we would like your teachers to help you to achieve higher standards in English, particularly in writing.

It was a pleasure to visit your school. We pass on our best wishes to you and thank you once again.

Yours faithfully

David Edwards

Lead inspector