

Hoole St Michael Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119570
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327073
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Yvonne Mills-Clare

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)	108
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	Rev. Steven Hughes
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Melling
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Liverpool Old Road Much Hoole Preston Lancashire PR4 5JQ

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average Church of England primary school. It has close links to the local church and serves an area of social and economic advantage. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion of pupils are eligible to receive a free school meal and the number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has several awards including Healthy Schools. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision consisting of one Reception class.

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 with outstanding features. Parents feel very much a part of the school family, which is extremely welcoming and caring. In their very positive response to the inspection questionnaire, a typical comment was, 'The school is welcoming to pupils and parents alike.' Many parents admire and respect the dedication and commitment of the staff describing them as 'helpful and supportive' and 'generally concerned about our children'.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. There is a strong sense of community spirit and all pupils clearly enjoy coming to school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary with pupils showing high levels of respect for staff and for one another. All have an excellent understanding of a healthy lifestyle and pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Overall, standards are well above average and pupils' achievement throughout the school is good. This includes pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities who benefit from activities which are tailored to meet their individual learning needs. Children's skills on entry to Reception cover a wide range, but are generally above those typically seen in children aged four years. They progress well and reach above average standards by the start of Year 1. By the end of Year 2, children attain standards that are usually well above average. They continue to build on this good progress through Key Stage 2 and leave at the end of Year 6 having attained standards that are well above national averages in English, mathematics and science. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve their challenging targets in their tested subjects.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan work to hold their interest in lessons. Questioning skills are generally good, but sometimes miss opportunities for pupils to extend their learning by involving them in evaluating their own and others' work. Excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that achievement for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. A good curriculum focuses on the acquisition of skills and is enhanced well by trips, visits and visitors.

Care, guidance and support are good, with outstanding levels of care and concern for everyone's welfare evident and all safeguarding requirements met. Attendance is good. Academic guidance is less effective in guiding learning. Pupils have targets, but they are not always sure what they need to do to improve their performance. Examples of marking that gives pupils clear and detailed guidance on how to improve were seen, but such systems are not yet consistently used throughout the school.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The key leadership personnel taking up post in September 2008 have a good range of expertise, readily embracing the school's vision and creating a strong, cohesive leadership team. Under the influential guidance of the headteacher, staff have a shared commitment to giving the best possible provision for the pupils. As a result, the school has improved since the last inspection and is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in Reception. Many enter the class with knowledge and skills that are close to or above those typical for their age. They make good progress and on entry

to Year 1 standards are above average. The high ratio of adults to children, the supportive, warm and caring relationships between adults and children, routines, taking turns and 'signing-in' to their chosen workstation, contribute positively to their outstanding personal development and welfare. They show excitement about the things they do, for example they waited eagerly for 'Percy the gardener' to arrive at his cottage.

The setting is well led and managed and this ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers and other adults collaborate effectively to ensure that experiences are closely tailored to every individual's needs. Adults know every child inside out and this, together with thorough assessment is central to children's progress. Induction arrangements are well organised and start when teachers visit children in their pre-school settings before they start school. Because of this, children settle rapidly and quickly grow in confidence. This continues to grow throughout Reception as they are encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility. By the time they enter Year 1, most are confident learners well placed for their next steps in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend pupils' learning by involving them more in using targets to improve their own progress and by better evaluating their own and others' work.
- Ensure consistency in the quality of marking and the use of targets to inform all pupils clearly what they must do next to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well above average and pupils' achievement, including pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, throughout the school is good. Pupils begin Year 1 with above average standards. By the end of Year 2, children attain standards that are typically well above average. They continue to progress well and leave at the end of Year 6 with levels that are significantly above national averages in each tested area. Unvalidated 2008 national test results for Year 6 show a slight dip in results, attributed to some pupils from the cohort narrowly missing the higher levels in the tests. However, the number of pupils attaining the higher levels in each tested subject still remains above national figures. The progress of boys has been a particular focus for the school. Tracking shows accelerated learning is occurring as a result of adapting parts of the curriculum to further engage boys. Pupils at Year 6 are on course to achieve their challenging targets in English, mathematics and science this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils say they really enjoy coming to school because their lessons are exciting and a typical comment is 'Teachers help you and make lessons fun.' Pupils thrive in the bright, welcoming learning environment, which has undergone major refurbishments over the last four years. The close relationship with the church, combined with the safe and caring atmosphere and the wide range of assemblies, visits and visitors to school, enrich pupils' experiences and promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and why it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils respond very well and are increasingly able to manage their own conduct and, as a result, their behaviour is excellent. Members of the school council take their work seriously and others act as 'Guardian Angels' to the younger children, promoting their confidence and independence. All the pupils

eagerly raise funds for charities for local and international causes. Attendance is above average. Good academic progress combined with very positive attitudes to learning means that pupils are well placed for future success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning overall are good, with outstanding and satisfactory lessons also seen. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupil progress. Lessons are planned well and take the needs of individual pupils into account. Teachers assess individual pupils' progress carefully and are quick to identify any not making the expected progress. An increasing number of lessons are giving many opportunities for pupils to experiment, investigate and share ideas with others. Pupils respond by concentrating hard and conscientiously working on the tasks given to them. Relationships are positive and classrooms are conducive to learning with visual prompts and working walls. Teachers use skilful questioning to determine how well pupils are learning but do not always offer opportunities for pupils to extend their thinking skills by involving them in evaluating their own and others' learning. Teaching assistants make a very important contribution to pupils' learning and their well-being by providing good assistance.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum in the school is good. It focuses on the skills to be learned which enables it to meet the needs of the mixed-age classes well. Pupils enjoy their education, and the curriculum successfully promotes their personal development. A wide range of enrichment activities enables them to develop a variety of interests. There are good opportunities to take part in physical activities. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy. The school ensures good provision for information and communication technology (ICT) through weekly ICT lessons and by the use of learning programmes that pupils can access by computer from home. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibilities in the school community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support overall is good. The care and support given to the pupils is excellent. There are rigorous procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their welfare. This ensures that pupils, including those who are more vulnerable, feel secure. The school provides a 'HUGS' (Heather's Unique Group) register where vulnerable pupils are supported by a designated adult and also 'HUGS buddies'; pupils on hand should anyone be upset or anxious. Individual education plans are clear and child friendly. They are monitored regularly to ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make appropriate progress. The school has established strong partnerships with outside professionals and other schools. Pupils say that there is no bullying and that they always feel safe and well looked after. Arrangements to support pupils on entry and on transfer to high schools are effective. Pupils have targets, but are not always sure what they need to do to improve their performance. There are examples of marking that give clear and detailed guidance to pupils about how to improve, but it is not consistently used to guide pupils throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management including governance are good. The headteacher's vision is to provide enriched and exciting learning experiences and create excellence in all aspects of the school's work. Ably assisted by the assistant headteacher and the new members of her leadership team, she is building a strong culture where all adults feel they have an essential role to support all pupils to achieve their potential. The school's promotion of equal opportunities is good. Self-evaluation is accurate. Effective systems are in place to track pupils' progress and all staff know their pupils well. Leaders and managers at all levels contribute to the school's procedures for

evaluating standards of teaching and learning and subject provision. Arrangements to enhance community cohesion are good. Links with local schools and community services, assemblies, themed days and the partnership with the church demonstrate the way the school reaches out into the local community and wider world. A large proportion of pupils appreciate the importance of belonging to a society that embraces different cultures and values. Governors are highly supportive, knowledgeable and committed and are extending their role to appropriately challenge the school to do the best for its pupils.

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
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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?	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?	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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	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?	2
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

30 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hoole St Michael Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, PR4 5JQ

Thank you very much for the welcome and help you gave me when I came to your school recently. I was very pleased to be treated in such a friendly way and I was amazed by how well you all get on with each other.

I was particularly impressed with the work you carry out as school councillors or 'Guardian Angels' looking after the little ones and by the 'HUGS' buddies who help other children in the school, as well as how often you get involved in charity work, both at home and abroad. I was pleased to hear how much you enjoy your lessons.

You get off to a really good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and most of you reach standards by the time you leave school that are well above average. You are making good progress in your work. This is because the teaching and the curriculum in your school is good and all the adults support your work so well.

I have asked your headteacher and teachers to let you know more about what you have to do to improve. This will work if you keep on trying to do your best. I have also asked that you take more part in your learning by trying to judge what you can do to make your work even better. You could try this with your friends' work as well.

You certainly know all about staying healthy and you told me all about the sports clubs that help you to keep fit and strong. I know that you enjoy them, as well as enjoying the many visitors who come to Hoole St Michael and the many visits you go on. They all help to make your learning really exciting.

Your school is a good school which is very caring and supports and helps you all well.

I am sure you will continue to work hard and always do your very best.

Yours sincerely

Yvonne Clare

Lead inspector