

St Luke's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133944
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	328776
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Walsh

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	441
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	Mr David White
Headteacher	Miss R Ruggles
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Morley Street Bury Lancashire BL9 9JQ
Telephone number	0161 7644988

Age group	3–11
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Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school was formed following the amalgamation of a community infant school and a Church of England junior school. The proportion of children who come from homes where English is not the first language is high and has increased since the previous inspection. The majority of children are of Pakistani heritage but almost a third are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Some pupils have very complex needs and this is reflected in an above average number of pupils who have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. More pupils join and leave the school at different times in the school year than is usual. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) unit which houses Nursery and Reception classes. The school has achieved the Primary Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and the Artsmark Gold.

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 where care and support for pupils are outstanding. Good leadership and management, including high aspirations and a sincere commitment to supporting each and every child ensure that all pupils achieve well. Challenging targets are set and these are usually exceeded. When children enter the Nursery, their skills are often exceptionally low. They get off to a good start in the EYFS and continue to make good progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. By the time pupils leave in Year 6 they have reached broadly average standards and have achieved well. This is not only because of good teaching and learning, but also because pupils' progress is very carefully monitored. Any pupils who are at risk of falling behind are quickly identified and are able to access effective intervention programmes. This, combined with valuable help from adults ensures that all pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are able to make good progress. Pupils who join the school partway through their schooling are made very welcome and many parents report that their children settle quickly. They make the same good progress as other pupils. The relationships between staff and vulnerable pupils are especially warm and caring, and parents of pupils with complex needs often describe the support their children receive as 'Brilliant'.

Teaching and learning are good and pupils thoroughly enjoy lively lessons. Although teachers' expectations are usually high, occasionally work is not matched carefully enough to pupils' needs and as a result, does not provide enough challenge for the most able, particularly in mathematics. Although the care and support pupils receive are outstanding, academic guidance is only satisfactory. Pupils receive suitable guidance in lessons but do not always receive sufficiently clear advice about how to improve their work through teachers' marking. Occasionally, insufficient use is made of academic targets.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils really like coming to school and this is reflected in their outstanding behaviour and improving rates of attendance. They are proud of their school and are keen to contribute through the school council and by helping others, including acting as playground buddies. The very good programme for personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are well informed about how to keep healthy and safe. The school works very well with parents and the local community, and links with other schools are used well to enhance the good curriculum and to extend sporting opportunities. The governors make a particularly valuable contribution to community cohesion because they actively promote harmonious relationships between the different groups of pupils that attend the school. Close work with leaders from the Muslim community is promoting mutual understanding and respect.

Good self-evaluation has ensured that the school has correctly identified the most important areas where improvements are needed. However, minor inconsistencies are sometimes missed because middle managers, including subject leaders, have not always had sufficient opportunities to check teaching and learning through looking directly at lessons and pupils' work. Nevertheless, the school's capacity to improve, as exemplified by improved standards in English and science and the very recent successes in accelerating achievement in mathematics, is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join the Nursery class they often have little or no spoken English and limited social skills. Although their skills are still below average when they join Year 1, they have achieved well as a result of good provision including good teaching and learning. Good leadership and management have led to a steady improvement in standards on exit over the last few years even though children's skills on entry are declining over time. Children make particularly rapid progress in their personal development. They learn to follow school routines, to get on well together and to speak English. There is a good range of activities and regular local visits that successfully extend children's range of learning experiences. The relatively new programme that encourages children to link sounds and letters is having a good impact on children's learning and the strong emphasis on reading is starting to pay dividends. Children have lots of opportunities to choose their own activities but the school is aware that the quality of support for these activities is variable. This is because assessment information is not always fully used to guide planning, particularly to take account of children's individual needs. Parents are delighted with provision in the EYFS unit typically saying, 'The teachers and teaching assistants are a fantastic team'. Valuable courses for parents are helping them to manage their children's behaviour. Children are well cared for and the school has ensured that all the latest welfare requirements are met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work is carefully matched to pupils' needs and provides effective challenge for the most able, particularly in mathematics.
- Make sure that pupils always know how to improve their work.
- Develop the role of middle managers so that they are more closely involved in checking the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2008 standards at the end of Key Stage 1 improved slightly but were still below average. The pupils entered Key Stage 1 with below average standards and their attainment at the end of Year 2 was also below average which represents satisfactory progress. More regular and effective checking of pupils' progress, combined with better quality teaching mean that pupils currently in Year 1 and 2 are now making good progress. The programme that encourages pupils to make effective links between sounds and letters is accelerating their progress in reading and writing. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are also making good progress, particularly in their reading and writing, as a result of the school's recent focus on improving literacy. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average. Inspection evidence shows significant improvements in standards with a much greater proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in English and more pupils reaching the expected Level 4 in science. Although the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 was broadly average in English and science, the proportions reaching the higher Level 5 were below average. The school has recognised that progress in mathematics is slightly slower than progress in English and science. Consequently, it has now focused its attention on this subject. Already, achievement in mathematics is being boosted with outstanding progress being seen in lessons in Year 2 and Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Close links with the local church, combined with good relationships with local Muslim leaders, has resulted in pupils developing a strong sense of spirituality and respect for each other's cultures. Behaviour is excellent, reflecting the clear moral guidance provided by the school and teachers' high expectations of conduct. Children say that bullying rarely happens and most comment that any issues that arise are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. Pupils have a strong commitment to maintaining healthy lifestyles as demonstrated by their involvement in sport and their willingness to make healthy choices of food. Sterling efforts to improve attendance have resulted in parents recognising the detrimental impact of absence. As a result, attendance rates have improved and are now satisfactory. Pupils are willing to work very hard indeed and this diligence and application, together with their good achievement in developing basic skills mean that they are well placed for future economic success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Subject knowledge and understanding are good and shared effectively with pupils. Exciting lessons often include the good use of modern technology and these encourage and engage the pupils. Inspection evidence points to some outstanding teaching which is concentrated at the end of the key stages, which is having a positive impact in raising standards. Teachers' expectations are usually high but, sometimes, more could be expected of the more able pupils. Work is not always finely matched to pupils' needs and, sometimes, average pupils and more able pupils are set the same work, particularly in mathematics. Good relationships between teachers and pupils encourage pupils to gain confidence because they know their contributions will always be valued. These good relationships also help teachers to manage behaviour very effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a strong emphasis on developing basic skills, particularly reading and writing. There is a good range of strategies in place which provide extra support for pupils' learning and their personal development and these are having a positive effect on pupils' achievements. The science curriculum is developing rapidly as opportunities for investigation improve. The school is aware that there could be better links between subjects and is working on developing a more creative approach to learning. The curriculum caters particularly well for pupils' personal development and arts weeks and themed activities add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Very good use is made of local visits to extend successfully the range of pupils' experiences, including regular visits to theatres and museums. Pupils are increasingly contributing to the local community through their musical activities. Extra-curricular provision is good with particularly good opportunities to keep fit by taking part in sport. Although the cramped school hall has curtailed some physical activities, the school has just received funding to build a bigger hall and community room.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Excellent care and support ensure that pupils really enjoy their education and feel respected and valued. This underpins pupils' good academic achievement and personal development. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and say that there is always someone to talk to if they have any problems. The vast majority of parents say that teaching staff are 'very approachable and understanding'. Measures that keep pupils safe, including child protection, health and safety procedures and safeguarding are in place and meet current requirements. Support for vulnerable pupils is central to the school's work and each and every pupil is cherished. Learners who are at risk of underachieving are very quickly identified and very well supported. Extensive work with parents and outside agencies ensures that pupils have access to appropriate provision. The good support provided by bilingual support assistants is central to the consistently good progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language. The school's involvement in a new emotional health initiative is having a positive effect on pupils' personal development and is offering extra help for families and carers. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The quality of marking is variable and does not always clearly identify the next steps in learning. In addition, there is limited reference to pupils' individual learning targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide an effective team, along with other senior leaders, including the governors; they are rigorously focused on raising standards and boosting achievement. The school's commitment to maximising the potential of pupils from all social backgrounds, faiths and ethnicities irrespective of their level of ability has gone from strength to strength. Standards in literacy and science have risen and the school is now robustly tackling standards and achievement in mathematics. Good quality monitoring, including the thorough analysis of data and the monitoring of pupils' progress has allowed the school to pinpoint where it needs to improve. Subject leaders have very good subject knowledge and are very skilled at teaching their own subjects. However, they do not always have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning through regular lesson observations and direct scrutiny of pupils' work. Governors know the school well. Not only do they offer very good support, they are also willing to ask challenging questions and skilfully fulfil the role of a critical friend. They are pivotal in ensuring that the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. The headteacher's recent visit to China has resulted in developing links with schools in China that enhance pupils' understanding of the worldwide community.

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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?	2
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	3
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?	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**

It was a delight and a privilege to visit your school. The inspection team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You go to a good school that looks after you very well indeed. It is clear that you have a great time at school because of all the fun things you have to do. We thought you were very well informed about how to keep healthy and safe. Your outstanding behaviour, good manners and the way you respect and value each other ensure that your school is a very pleasant place to be. We were impressed by your recent success in sport. Well done to all those children who took part, including those in the rugby, athletics and gymnastic teams.

Younger children really enjoy school and are doing very well because of the good teaching and the interesting activities provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

You are making good progress and by the end of Year 6 you are reaching standards that are similar to those reached by children in other primary schools. This is because teaching is good and also because you work very hard indeed in your lessons. Although you have lots of exciting lessons, we noticed that sometimes the work is not hard enough for more able pupils, particularly in mathematics, so we have asked teachers to make sure they always set challenging work. We have also asked teachers to make sure that you always know how to improve your work.

The managers in your school are doing a good job. We have asked some of them to develop their management skills yet further so they can help your school to become even better.

Thank you again for being such good company.