

Nelson St Philip's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119437
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	331269
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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)	134
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 Aysha Shaheen
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Ellidge
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Leeds Road Nelson Lancashire BB9 9TQ
Telephone number	01282 614463

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
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Fax number

01282 611823

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

St Philip's is smaller than the average primary school, serving an area with high levels of social and economic hardship. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. A large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic heritage and many of these are in the very early stages of developing English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below the national average. Children can access a local Children's Centre for before and after-school care. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage consists 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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a good school. It is an improving one and has several outstanding features, including pastoral care, pupils' behaviour and enjoyment of learning, spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, equality of opportunity and community cohesion. It is highly popular with parents and pupils. Staff well deserve their praise for 'making important improvements in different areas' and 'trying their best' to accelerate pupils' progress. The school has very limited space, inside and out, with no playing fields and no green areas. Nevertheless, the leadership and management team have successfully adapted a Victorian building with a school yard into an attractive and vibrant learning environment, where pupils of diverse ethnicity work and play in harmony.

When children begin Reception, their skills are well below those typical for this age group. Progress is good throughout the school and a minority reach the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. Writing is broadly average by the end of Year 2, although reading and mathematics are below average. By the end of Year 6, English, mathematics and science are all broadly average. This represents good achievement for all pupils, including those at the early stages of language acquisition and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who make comparable progress to their peers. Pupils also acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to become caring and active citizens. Aspirations are rising; pupils are courteous and cooperative with adults and each other; they have highly positive attitudes to learning. Attendance is slightly below the national average, despite the school's success with persistent absentees and families willingly following recommendations to incorporate extended leave during the school's official holidays to prevent loss of pupil achievement.

These successes have been the result of effective provision. Good teaching and learning are more consistent across the school and there are examples of outstanding practice. The curriculum has been completely revitalised; it meets the needs of all pupils, captures and sustains their interests and motivates them to strive for improvement. Care, guidance and support are good: pastoral care is excellent because everything is done to keep pupils safe, secure and happy; academic guidance has ensured that pupils know what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. The pupil tracking system is accurate and efficiently used by senior staff but the responsibility for analysing data is not shared by all staff and this restricts further progress. Reading opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons and time is limited for crucial individual practice. Sometimes pupils approach work with a lack of urgency and their output is limited. This does not occur in those lessons where time limits are set and expectations are high. Teachers' marking is encouraging and constructive but pupils rarely correct and redraft their work, using teachers' directions. As a result, opportunities for personalised learning are missed.

Leadership and management are good at all levels. The headteacher, staff and governors have worked well together successfully to raise standards, both socially and academically. Having been appointed just before the last inspection, the headteacher has given a quick but very decisive lead to improvement, harnessing the excellent support of the local authority and many other partnerships. All aspects of school life have been rigorously audited and monitored. All staff have received appropriate training for initiatives and their expertise has been fully used

for the good of the school and the care of its pupils. As a result, the school now has good capacity for further improvement and currently represents good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

This is effective because staff work well together. They have successfully established a beautiful and stimulating environment, both indoors and out, that ensures children's development across all aspects of learning. It is well led and managed. There is effective liaison with nurseries; induction and transitional arrangements are secure and relationships with parents are well established so that parents learn how to support their children's learning. The curriculum is well balanced between child-initiated and adult-led learning because of careful planning, the incorporation of children's interests and the imaginative use of resources. As a result, there is smooth flow between activities and basic skills are consolidated and extended throughout the day. Opportunities for further reading practice are sometimes missed but daily phonics sessions are giving children the confidence to write their ideas in recognisable format. Levels on entry vary. They range from below the typical to exceptionally low. The current Reception class entered with skills below those typical for this age group. They are on track to enter Year 1 with average standards, except for writing and calculation, which are still low. This good progress is the result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching and learning and the excellent promotion of children's welfare so that children feel happy and safe. Staff listen to children's ideas well and extend them through commentary, suggestion and questioning. Personal, social and emotional development grows quickly. Staff establish good procedures in a warm, nurturing environment, encourage friendship and cooperation and actively seek to raise self-esteem by praising children's successes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils have more opportunities to develop their reading skills throughout the day.
- Ensure time limits in lessons are set to increase the pace of learning.
- Ensure all staff share responsibility for collating and analysing data so that standards throughout the school continue to rise.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

At the end of Year 2 writing is broadly average because of the successful focus on this subject throughout the school, although reading and mathematics are below national averages. This reflects standard test results over the last three years and represents good progress because of the exceptionally low level on entry for these particular pupils. At Key Stage 2, standards for English, mathematics and science, as seen in pupils' work and lessons, have improved and are now at expected levels. This represents good achievement. Much work has been done to raise language standards over the last two years because most pupils do not speak English in the home. In national test results, standards in mathematics and science have been below average for some years because of the need to translate technical language into Punjabi and respond in writing quickly enough in the time available. Staff are currently targeting technical language to relieve this situation. The school has exceeded its targets for progress in mathematics between Key Stages 1 and 2 while practical work in science has enhanced pupils' understanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

These are good, and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is seen in their excellent behaviour, improved attendance and very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils really enjoy school and the opportunities it offers. They say staff make learning exciting and they comment enthusiastically about such diverse activities as playing musical instruments, sending emails to schools in America and Australia, inter-school councils, competitions and sports tournaments. Pupils feel they are making good progress because staff give them work matched to their ability, encourage them socially and are always there 'to listen and help.' They have a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles and safety. They participate in a wide range of sport. Pupils say that bullying is a very rare occurrence and one which staff resolve quickly so that they feel safe. They enjoy responsibilities, such as helping in the office and as laptop managers. Pupils also enjoy community involvement, whether singing at the local hospital, recycling waste or raising money for cancer research. Their aspirations are rising as they experience success. They work extremely well together and leave school well equipped for the future with effective basic skills, a wide range of learning experiences and very good work attitudes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Due to rigorous monitoring there is now greater consistency across the school. Staff successfully engage pupils by imaginative activities, often practical, in realistic contexts, such as calculating the cost of the school's trip to Blackpool. Accurate tracking of pupils' progress is enabling staff to match work to ability and to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged and supported. Information and communication technology (ICT) is particularly well used to sustain concentration and staff are inventive in their use of recording methods, so that basic skills are well consolidated across the curriculum. Staff have good subject knowledge and successfully use the media and topical issues, such as 'The Apprentice', to inspire pupils' interest. Occasionally, the pace in lessons is rather slow because explanations are over-long, pupils do not move to the next stage of their learning quickly and there are no time limits for the tasks set. When this occurs, progress is more limited.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is progressive, relevant and exciting. It successfully encourages participation in sports, music and other hobbies. Its enrichment activities, incorporating visits and visitors, motivate pupils well and meet all their needs. Priority is rightly given to basic skills, including phonics, which are taught in ability sets across the school. Basic skills, including ICT, are consolidated across the curriculum, although reading opportunities are sometimes limited. Support for learning is provided by a clear homework policy, booster classes and catch-up programmes. The school ensures there is equality of access for all pupils. Health and citizenship programmes, using materials to value similarities and resolve conflict, support pupils personally. Projects link subjects in a meaningful way and provide sufficient depth to sustain attention. The school provides a calm ethos and consistent application of its behaviour policy so that all

learn about right and wrong. The local authority's award for Race Equality recognises the school's anti-racist community work and appreciation of diversity.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral aspect of care is outstanding. The school meets all statutory requirements and does everything it can to keep pupils safe, happy and secure. Risk assessments are in order and regularly updated, while staff are trained appropriately and frequently to ensure safeguarding and general health and safety systems are robust. Parents feel comfortable approaching the school about family and general issues, while there are many examples of exemplary care given to individual pupils and their families. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure the vulnerable and those in need receive appropriate resources. Academic guidance is good. All pupils know their targets and are well supported towards them. Marking is usually constructive. It gives pupils good directions for improvement although few opportunities to respond. The progress tracking system is accurate and efficiently compiled and used by senior members of staff. Other staff are not as confident accessing this independently and so their use of data is more limited.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good at all levels and there is a clear feeling of accountability in the school. The dedicated headteacher, ably assisted by a hard-working deputy headteacher, has sharply focused on priorities to raise standards since the last inspection. Rigorous systems to track progress and monitor the impact of initiatives are well established. Senior staff and subject leaders now use data effectively to access a better overview of their subject. Much work has been done to improve the school's environment and resources. This has increased pupil and staff motivation and led to greater efficiency. Curricular developments have been creative and wide-reaching; they have resulted in pupils' enjoyment of learning. Governance is good. Governors have made some good staff appointments and purchased resources, such as laptops, which have considerably enhanced pupils' computer skills. Governors know the school well and because they are active in its work they add effectively to its self-evaluation process. The leadership team have begun to raise pupils' achievement, personally and academically, by the use of challenging targets but knows how much there is still to do. They have promoted inclusion and excellent community cohesion. The school has enhanced its own community and that of the church. Its pupils are actively involved in community projects and enjoy regular links with socially and ethnically diverse schools, both globally and in Britain. The school now has good capacity to improve and currently represents good value for money.

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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?	1
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?	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	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	1
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	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	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	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**

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nelson St Philip's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, BB9 9TQ

Thank you for the welcome you gave me during your recent inspection. You were very helpful and courteous and I appreciated the assistance you gave me. I received a lot of completed questionnaires from your parents. Please thank them on my behalf. Their comments and judgements also helped me.

Your school has made lots of progress since the last inspection. It is now a good school and an improving one. It has some outstanding features. These include spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. You really enjoy your learning and your behaviour is excellent. The standards of your work have improved and you have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to become responsible citizens of the future. The teaching and learning you receive are good. You study some interesting projects and staff take good care of you, both personally and academically. Your school is well led and managed. The headteacher has successfully reviewed all aspects of school life and put in place the necessary changes for success. I have asked your school to do three things to improve further.

- To ensure pupils practise their reading skills throughout the day.
- To use time-limits when you are set tasks to speed up your learning.
- To ensure all staff add information to the progress tracker and all staff use it effectively to ensure as many pupils as possible make the best possible progress.

I was most impressed with the improvement in your attendance. Congratulations to those who achieve 100%! You have the best chance of making progress.

My very best wishes to you and your families.

Yours faithfully

Joan Elton

Lead inspector