

Simonstone St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119428
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339438
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Aizlewood
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2007
School address	School Lane Simonstone Burnley BB12 7HR
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed four teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's updated self-evaluation evidence, the school improvement plan, internal and external monitoring of the school and 62 returned parental questionnaires, 66 pupil questionnaires and 11 staff questionnaires.

- achievement and attainment at both Key Stages, especially in writing and ICT
- provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the involvement of all staff in leadership and management.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are White British, with a very small number of mixed or Asian heritages. All pupils speak English. An assistant headteacher has been seconded to school for a year from September 2009. The school has gained Healthy School status and Investors in People award. There is a before- and after-school club located at the school which is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection. A separate inspection report for this provision is available on the Ofsted website.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school and pupils and their parents are proud of it. The Early Years Foundation Stage is good: children are cared for well and make good progress. Parents of children across all ages make comments like, 'My children have always been well cared for, but most of all they are extremely happy here,' and 'I feel very proud when I tell people what school my child goes to.' Many pupils comment on how much they enjoy lessons and 'can't wait to come to school'. Unsurprisingly, their attendance is excellent. They have an extremely good understanding of how to stay healthy. The school's spiritual and learning ethos is central to its character and reflects the good care and support that is provided for each pupil. As one pupil commented, 'Celebration assemblies are amazing.'

The quality of teaching is largely good. Pupils are fascinated and engrossed when they are challenged and stimulated. However, some pupils are unclear about what is being asked of them and are less involved in their learning. Pupils generally enjoy their learning and make good progress to attain well-above average standards in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Pupils' attainment in writing is above average. Pupils skills in writing are not consistently developed in other subjects. This is also the case for information and communication technology (ICT) where resources are limited.

The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths as well as areas to improve because senior leaders rigorously track pupils' performance and set exacting standards for improvement. Attainment has risen over the past two years and current pupils' work demonstrates continuing improvement. This is most evident in mathematics, particularly for more-able pupils, where there is significant improvement. The governing body is well led and focused on school improvement. The school has acted effectively on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. These developments and dynamic leadership and management, demonstrate the school's good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment in writing and ICT by developing its use across most subjects and increasing resources in new technology.
- Plan lessons carefully to improve pupils' understanding and involvement in their learning by ensuring that all teaching is consistently good or better.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Pupils achieve well from above-average starting points in Year 1. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils enjoy learning, particularly in lessons where they are challenged and stimulated by interesting and thoughtful work. For example, in a Years 5 and 6 lesson, pupils crafted resonant portrayals of character based on a close study of the script and the playwright's stage directions. Pupils' attainment is well above average overall and is particularly strong in mathematics, reading and for more-able pupils. Standards in writing are above average and improving; the school has begun to include writing in the teaching of many other subjects to focus on improving pupils' writing skills. The use of ICT to improve attainment in writing is hampered by a lack of resources. Vulnerable pupils are rapidly identified and provided with carefully focused support, especially in well-planned and well-taught small-group work.

Pupils feel safe and secure. They are very polite and responsible young people because of the school's high expectations of behaviour and because they are cared for as individuals. They welcome opportunities to take on responsibility and take great pride, for instance, in their roles on the school council, the 'Eco' committee and as 'buddies' helping younger pupils. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and were behind the large increase in the take up of school meals. They now choose a lunch of their choice from a healthy menu provided the day before.

They make good contributions to the school and local community through parish activities, the choir and generous fundraising. The school is further developing their contributions to the wider community. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good overall and their spiritual development is outstanding. They are reflective and empathetic because they are taught to understand and value themselves and others. The school accurately identifies the need to develop pupils' experiences and awareness of those from backgrounds which differ from their own.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Mostly enjoyable and well-planned lessons provide a good range of activities which engage pupils' interests. For instance, Years 1 and 2 pupils thrived on the rapid pace and reflective discussion that is expected of them. Teachers have embraced the school priority to improve assessment. As a result, pupils' generally understand how well they are doing in their work, as well as what they need to do in order to move forward in their learning. However, in a few instances, where teaching is satisfactory, it is less effective when lengthy introductions are not matched to the needs and interests of each pupil and they do not always know what to do. Positive relationships and pupils' good attitudes to learning characterise the vast majority of lessons. A range of teaching skills, group work and one-to-one attention by effective teaching assistants, support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and help them learn well.

The curriculum is well planned and becoming more enjoyable because it is starting to be planned in 'themes'. Pupils are learning more because they make effective links between, for example, geography, history and art. Very attractive displays of children's art throughout the school provide a stimulating and celebratory school environment. However, there are missed opportunities to develop the provision for writing and ICT in all subjects. Pupils are impatient to speak to each other and visitors in French because of the well-planned modern foreign languages provision. Many after school activities are available and enthusiastically attended. Despite the small size of the school, pupils are rightly proud to have gained a large number of trophies in, for example, netball and tag rugby.

Each pupil is valued and known individually. This is a central principle of the school. Pupils are welcomed into school and well prepared for school life. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of well tailored support; they develop their confidence and skills through the individual support that is provided. The school works effectively with outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to meet the needs of individuals. Parents are becoming much more involved in their child's learning through target cards detailing their child's progress. Good preparation for secondary education, well-above average standards overall, and pupils' excellent attendance all contribute to preparing pupils well for their future.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	2
	2
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, seconded assistant headteacher and governors are committed in their mission to improve outcomes for pupils. All staff share this vision because of the headteacher's determination to involve them in her drive to improve pupils' life chances. Work is generally well adapted to meet pupils' requirements and, overall, pupils meet, and sometimes exceed, their challenging targets. Parents are very supportive and involved in the school's work and they are increasingly involved in their child's learning. Community cohesion is particularly strong in the local community and the school hall is used regularly by community groups. The school acknowledges the need to take this aspect further in order to prepare pupils more fully for life in a multicultural society. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. Good partnerships with outside agencies such as the parish and the local authority, lead to a strong focus on pupils' personal and academic development. School self-evaluation is accurate and has led to effective monitoring of the school's performance. Equality of opportunity for all and tackling discrimination are central to the school's character and they are promoted well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	2
	2
<p>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</p>	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skills that are variable but broadly typical for their age. By the time they join Year 1 their skills are above those for their age. They happily settle into school routines and quickly grow in confidence. Children make good progress in most aspects of their learning, especially in their mathematical and language development, particularly in linking sounds and letters. This is because teaching is good and children enjoy activities that engage their interest and encourage them to explore for themselves. They delight, for example, in role play as pirates and astronauts because of well planned indoor activities. Nevertheless, more limited use of the outdoor space reduces opportunities to develop children's physical, social and personal skills and extend their experiences across all areas of learning. Relationships are good and children are safe and well cared for in this secure environment. All welfare procedures are in place and meet current requirements. Leadership and management are good. Staff work well as a team. They use a good range of resources and examples of children's creative work to provide an attractive, welcoming learning environment. There are strong links with parents, who are very supportive of their children's learning both in school and at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded through the completed questionnaires were happy with the school's provision and indicated that their children enjoyed school. The vast majority of parents and carers also agreed that the school helped their child to have a healthy lifestyle and that the school met their child's individual needs. Inspectors agree that these aspects are good. There were a very small number of concerns about behaviour but inspectors found no evidence to support these. The school is working hard to involve parents and carers more in their child's learning and the new target cards are beginning to do this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Simonstone St Peter's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 125 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	73	16	26	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	48	77	12	19	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	52	29	47	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	60	23	37	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	65	20	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	65	20	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	61	23	37	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	53	25	40	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	55	23	37	3	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	56	20	32	4	6	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	53	25	40	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	36	58	23	37	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	63	21	34	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Dear Pupils

It was lovely to visit your school. The inspection team thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and listened carefully to what you had to say. Thank you for welcoming us so happily and special thanks to the pupils who showed me round the school so professionally and informatively. You told us how much you enjoy school life and your attendance is excellent. Congratulations to each one of you! Yours is a good school. I want to mention the children in the Reception class in particular because some of you told me how pleased you were that I was going to write you a letter. All children and pupils are very involved in school life and well done for recommending menus to encourage more pupils to eat healthily.

You help and care for each other. Younger children settle down well in the Reception class and you make sure that older pupils look after the younger ones. You are well cared for and feel very safe in school. This makes an important contribution to your future because your work is very good and you are confident young people.

You are keen to learn and this helps you to achieve well. We have asked your school to make teaching even better to make sure you are more involved and all understand what you have to do in your lessons. We would like you to improve your standards in writing and in ICT, and have asked teachers to include opportunities for you to write and use ICT more in all your work. We have also asked the school to buy more computers for you and know you will appreciate that! Your headteacher and all the staff are working hard to make your school even better.

I wish you every success for your future.

Yours sincerely,

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