

St John's Stonefold CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119453
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339444
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2009
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	128
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Roger Smith
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Oldfield
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited six lessons and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, groups of pupils and representatives from the local authority. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation evidence, the school development plan, assessment information about pupils' progress, pupils' workbooks and internal and external monitoring of the school. Inspectors also evaluated questionnaire responses from pupils, staff and 32 parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which all pupils, particularly the most able, make progress and enjoy their learning
- the quality of teaching and assessment to support learning
- how effectively leaders and managers track pupils' progress to improve the school's performance.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A below average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in the Reception class. The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Activemark for its sports provision. There has been significant staff absence over the present half term, particularly older Key Stage 1 and younger Key Stage 2 classes. Temporary teachers are covering for staff who are on long-term absence.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and achievement.

The headteacher has provided a strong lead for the personal development of pupils over the last two years. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive, attendance has improved and parents hold the school in high regard. However, until recently there has been insufficient focus on the continuous progress that pupils make across the school. This is particularly so for older Key Stage 1 and younger Key Stage 2 pupils where they have previously been taught by different staff. Shortcomings in curriculum planning and in the tracking of pupils' progress have resulted in pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, being uneven and inadequate overall,.

The quality of teaching is too variable. There is too little that is good. Teachers are beginning to use assessment information to plan lessons and target improvement but this is not yet consistent. Too many pupils are not aware of how they are doing in their work or how to go about improving it. Action taken by the school to improve the attainment of its more able pupils has been successful for Year 6 pupils in science and, to some extent, in mathematics. It is too soon to see significant improvements in attainment at the higher levels in English and for subjects in Key Stage 1.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and are welcoming and courteous. 'I like school a lot.' comments one pupil and this is echoed by their parents in comments such as, 'My child thoroughly enjoys coming to school.' Pupils feel safe and relish the wide range of enrichment activities, particularly in sport and drama. Pupils' moral and social development is a strength; pupils respect others and older pupils look after the younger ones. They are proud to hold the many positions of responsibility available to them, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school's leaders have not been driving improvement well enough to halt under-achievement in the past. However, the school has accurately identified the key priorities for improvement and there is a palpable sense of common purpose among staff. This can be seen in the recent improvements in pupils' attitudes to learning and higher standards particularly in the current Year 6. A strengthened governing body and the determined commitment of the chair of governors are breathing a new lease of life

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into tackling problems head on. Senior staff, supported by local authority partners, have already put in place effective procedures to improve the quality of teaching. This has been particularly effective through the use of advanced skills teachers, the sharing of good practice and additional in class staff support. Recent actions taken by the school to improve standards in Year 6 have proved effective in mathematics and science and there are early signs that where assessment is being used well throughout the school pupils' progress is at least satisfactory. These clear signs of improvement and the positive learning environment indicate that the school has the capacity to secure improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and achievement particularly for the most able pupils and the older Key Stage 1 and younger Key Stage 2 pupils, by:
 - improving the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation systems so that underperformance is identified and tackled quickly and effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is of a consistently good standard by:
 - rigorously using assessment information to plan work which matches pupils' interests, needs and abilities, especially of the more able
 - ensuring pupils are aware of their individual targets so that they know how well they are doing and understand their next steps in learning
 - improving the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation systems so that teaching is improved.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils enjoy their learning when they are stimulated and involved in interesting activities. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils were thrilled to present their poetry findings to the class. Nevertheless, pupils sometimes lose interest and motivation when they are not sure what to do because tasks are not explained clearly or when work is not matched to their previous learning. Lesson planning has not been consistently satisfactory in those lessons where pupils have been taught by temporary teachers. Consequently, some aspects of the curriculum have occasionally been repeated or missed.

Pupils' attainment in recent years has been broadly in line with national averages. There is a trend of improving attainment for the more able pupils at the end of Year 6, but there are still some pupils in Years 2 and 6 who are insufficiently challenged.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and are particularly proud of the healthy tuck shop they help to run and of their sporting accomplishments. A pupil comments, 'My school is a healthy school.' whilst another says, 'I enjoy all the sports.' Pupils make a positive contribution to their school and the local community through caring for the local environment and their strong links with the parish. The school acknowledges the need to involve pupils more in the wider community. Pupils' social

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skills, average attendance and their average attainment in basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for the future. The school correctly identifies the need to provide more information and communication technology resources in order to improve pupils' computer skills. There are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about the similarities and differences of people from other cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is too variable across the school. It is most consistently effective for older Key Stage 2 pupils where good planning and pupils' enjoyment of learning moves them forward well. Teaching is inadequate overall: it is not strong enough, especially for younger Key Stage 2 pupils, and in mathematics and writing, to enable pupils to catch up on gaps in their learning. As a result, a significant minority of these pupils do not make the progress they should during their time in school. Assessment systems are beginning to be used more effectively to provide further challenge and teachers' marking includes some detailed, thorough guidance. However, this is inconsistent and there are still too many pupils who are not sure how well they

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

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are doing in their work or how they can improve.

Although satisfactory overall the curriculum does not always provide the different strategies needed to match the abilities and interests of individuals and groups of pupils in all mixed-age classes. However, in some instances this is successful, for example, in well-planned lessons for older pupils, they rise to challenges provided in thought provoking extension activities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are appropriately identified and provided with support. Enrichment activities, especially in sport, drama and the arts, add a strong dimension to the curriculum. Displays of pupils' work, their knowledge and appreciation of artists' work and their enthusiasm for the arts reflects a strong programme of enrichment.

Home visits and good procedures in the Early Years Foundation Stage prepare children well for school life. This is reflected further in effective preparation for joining Year 1. Links with the neighbouring high school prepare pupils for the next stage in their education and their confidence develops as a result. The personal and emotional needs of vulnerable pupils are satisfactorily met through in-class support and one-to-one guidance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have correctly identified priorities for improvement and know what is needed in order to make the school more effective. More accurate and rigorous self-evaluation is helping senior leaders to identify the most urgent priorities for improvement. The school has enlisted the support of the local authority to accelerate pupils' progress by improving the quality of teaching and ensuring that assessment of learning is more accurate. Early indications show these measures are beginning to have a positive impact. For example, the attainment of more able pupils has risen, improvements to planning are providing more continuity in learning, and regular scrutiny of pupils' work is allowing senior staff to provide appropriate interventions promptly.

The school's commitment to community cohesion is reflected most effectively in pupils' involvement in their school and local community. The school identifies accurately the need to extend pupils' understanding and awareness of the wider community. The school is committed to the elimination of discrimination in many respects, but too many pupils are not getting an equal chance to achieve as well as they should. Parents are encouraged to participate in opportunities available to share in their child's learning and

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to be involved in school life, especially through the 'Friends of Stonefold School' group. Safeguarding procedures are secure and meet current government requirements. Governors are supportive and involved in school life, but have not been effective in tackling school weaknesses in the past. They are now more willing to challenge senior leaders and to be more involved in the school's self-evaluation processes. The school provides inadequate value for money because a significant minority of pupils make inadequate progress.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Reception class feel reassured and welcome; consequently, they are well prepared for starting school. Children's starting points are at the expected levels for their age. Their progress is satisfactory and improving, especially in their personal and social development. They attain levels that are in line with those expected for their age at the end of the Reception Year. This is because of satisfactory and improving leadership and management, which is based on effective team work and clear goals. Requirements regarding children's welfare, health and safety are fully met.

Children are eager to play and explore. Acting as shopkeepers, children counted out money, compiled lists and engaged in meaningful conversations with adults and other children. Such opportunities to explore and learn through play are limited by space and sparse resources both indoors and outdoors. Teaching is satisfactory overall, including some good aspects, especially when children's independence is encouraged. Not all children are supported to make full use of the free flow between indoor and outdoor activities and this reduces their opportunities for independent learning. Good

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relationships foster children's security and confidence in this caring environment.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents who responded were happy with the school's provision and all parents indicated that their children enjoyed school. A small number of parents were concerned about their child's progress as well as the quality of information given to them about their child's progress. Inspectors agree and this is recognised by the school as a priority.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Stonefold CofE 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 128 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	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)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	0	0	0	0	0	0	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



9 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Stonefold CofE Primary School, Accrington BB5 2SW

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish to thank you for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school. I would particularly like to thank the pupils who met with us as well as the pupils who took us on such an interesting tour of the school. You were all very polite and helpful. The school has worked hard to help you to adopt a healthy lifestyle. You clearly enjoy lots of exercise as well as eating healthy well-balanced meals. The school has worked well to encourage you to understand others and become thoughtful, caring young people.

I looked very carefully at your school and found that in some ways it is not as good as it should be. I have judged that it needs a notice to improve; this means that other inspectors will visit the school to see if things are improving quickly enough. You can play a valuable part in this and I would like you to help your teachers to improve your school and make it better for all of you.

I want all of you to achieve as well as you can and reach higher standards so I have asked the school to do the following things:

- make sure that the teaching you receive is good enough to improve your progress and raise standards, particularly for older Key Stage 1 and younger Key Stage 2 pupils and for those of you who need bigger challenges
- give you work that best helps you to learn and also to explain how to improve your work.

I wish you every success for your future.

Yours sincerely

Marie Cordey

Lead inspector

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