

Carnforth Christ Church, Church of England, Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119522
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339461
Inspection dates	13–14 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Sue Sharkey

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	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Daphne Durham
Headteacher	Mrs Mary Frankland
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited four lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and the local authority school adviser. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's system for tracking pupils' progress, pupils' books, safeguarding documents, key policies, assessments and 30 parental questionnaires.

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

- how successful are the actions the school has already put in place to raise attainment in writing
- whether teachers are sufficiently challenging pupils so that they make the best possible progress
- how well the staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage use curricular plans to make full use of both the indoor and outdoor areas
- whether information about pupils' progress is monitored rigorously enough so that support is quickly put in place for identified pupils.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average and almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has some classes containing pupils from two different year groups. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of Reception age children, and they are taught in a class with Year 1 pupils. The number of pupils varies widely across year groups. The school holds the National Healthy School Award, Sports Activemark and has Eco School Silver status.

There have been recent changes in staffing and the large majority of teachers in post at the start of the school year were new in post.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This school provides a good education for its pupils. Parents are confident in the new staff and most feel that this is a good school. Effective links with the community and a range of external partners help to meet the various needs of pupils and bring benefits to their learning and personal development. By the time pupils leave school, they are active learners and confident young citizens, keen to play their part in the community.

Effective strategies recently put in place to raise standards are resulting in children in the Early Years Foundation Stage making good progress. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 good teaching and a good curriculum ensures that most pupils progress well. Due to small numbers there is some variation in standards from year-to-year. However, most pupils enter school with standards that are broadly as expected for their age and by the time they leave Year 6 most reach above average standards, particularly in mathematics. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress to their peers.

Pupils develop good personal qualities. They have a good understanding of their local community, taking part in events and giving musical performances. They show a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and are keen on physical exercise. They enjoy the many after-school clubs such as dodge ball or dance. Through residential activities pupils learn to work in teams and gain independence, preparing them well for their future life.

Effective teaching and a well planned curriculum ensure that pupils enjoy school and achieve well. In lessons, learning proceeds at a good pace and teachers plan so that there is plenty of opportunity for talk and discussion. Marking, whilst up to date, is inconsistent in how it helps pupils to know how to improve their work. Pupils' progress is usually carefully tracked. Effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is provided by a good team of support staff, but work is not always challenging enough for the more able pupils.

The school's evaluation of its own performance is effective and identifies strengths and weaknesses. It has put strategies in place to raise attainment and has been quick to tackle recent underachievement in writing. The impact of these actions, and its rate of improvement since the previous inspection, demonstrates good capacity to improve further. Governors are well informed about the school, but their procedures for monitoring its effectiveness are not rigorous enough.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:

- providing enough challenge to meet the needs of more able pupils and ensure they progress well
- ensuring greater quality and consistency in the marking of pupils' work so that it helps all pupils know how to improve.
- Ensure that governors have rigorous systems in place to monitor and evaluate the school's performance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupil's enjoyment of learning is evident throughout the school. They are confident learners who are keen to talk about their work and share their understanding. Pupils say lessons can be fun. For example, Year 4 pupils enjoyed counting backwards and forwards in multiples of five rhythmically, whilst Year 2 and 3 pupils chattered eagerly to each other about the story they were planning and writing. Writing is currently a focus for improvement and there is clear evidence that pupils' writing has already improved since the start of the school year. Year 2 pupils are confidently using joined up letters in their handwriting and more accurate punctuation. Pupils in all classes are motivated to learn and questioning by teachers and teaching assistants helps to extend pupils learning.

Pupils value what the staff do for them and parents confirm that their children enjoy school and are safe. Most pupils behave well; they are friendly, polite and considerate. They say they enjoy the many activities that are provided for them particularly those to keep them fit. During break time they were keen to show the facilities provided on the field and talked proudly about the 'willow dens' and the wooden fort. They are pleased with the salad bar at lunch time, which is run by older pupils. During the summer, this can include tomatoes and lettuce grown in their own garden by the eco team. Pupils' involvement in the school and wider community is good. Pupils participate in the school council and develop a good awareness of taking responsibility in the school and wider community. They are keen to actively help others through fund raising or links with groups in the community. Attendance is above average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching across the school is typified by planning that identifies clear objectives and careful deployment of teaching assistants. A positive feature in all lessons is the high quality of relationships between staff and pupils, which helps to create a supportive climate for learning. Lessons contain a good range of activities and teachers provide a lively, stimulating environment. Formal assessment of pupils' progress is carried out regularly, but assessment throughout lessons is not always rigorous enough to allow teachers to build on pupils' previous learning in their planning. In particular, work is not always challenging enough for the more able pupils. Lessons are enhanced by educational visits and a variety of visitors. Marking is regular and positive in tone, but does not consistently help pupils understand what they have to do to improve their work.

Pupils' progress in numeracy and literacy is helped by the many opportunities they have to practise their basic skills in other subjects. Themed topics are planned throughout the school so that pupils develop their skills progressively as they move from year-to-year. For example, recent work on Ancient Egypt has resulted in pupils throughout the school producing good quality art work, artefacts and jewellery. A wide range of well supported clubs after school successfully broadens the curriculum. Music is a strength of the school and pupils learn different instruments and perform in public. Good links are established with the local secondary school where pupils enjoy the opportunity to extend their skills and knowledge, for example, in science when they work with teachers at the school. The school is keen to welcome visitors to enrich the curriculum. For example, when pupils were studying World War 2, an invitation to work with them was eagerly accepted

by people from the local community.

Staff have a clear understanding of pupils' needs. As result, pupils feel cared for, valued and secure and their self-esteem is raised. Pupils know that if they have problems they can talk with adults in school who will listen to them and provide support. Effective systems are in place to help pupils develop personal skills and enjoy learning. The school is developing links with the local pre-school which help children to settle quickly. Links with the local secondary school help to ease transition at the end of Year 6 and the school works with a range of agencies to support pupils' needs, including those with additional learning needs. The school has adopted satisfactory practices to ensure pupils are safe and has recently introduced strategies that have improved attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and governors work well together as a team to raise standards and set an effective tone and atmosphere for learning. Governors are well informed about most aspects of school life; they support and challenge with enthusiasm and commitment. However, their procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are not rigorous enough and this reduces their overall effectiveness. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory. Middle managers, some of whom are newly in post, make an effective contribution to leadership. The school's systems for checking the quality of teaching and assessment are good. New subject leaders have been quick to act on issues to raise standards and they are appropriately focused on developing their monitoring role, so that pupil's progress is tracked rigorously enough to improve provision for all. The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination, but as yet the more able pupils are not always achieving the levels of which they are capable. The school has a positive relationship with parents and carers. The school shows a good commitment to promoting community cohesion. Pupils have the opportunity to visit and welcome pupils from a school in Bolton which helps them to develop their cultural awareness.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start in their personal, social and emotional development. Good links with parents help children to settle confidently into school life and provide a boost to successful learning. By the time they reach Year 1, most have reached the expected levels of knowledge, skills and understanding for their age. Children mix well with the older pupils in their mixed-age class and receive good care, support and guidance from teaching assistants.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, ensuring that the curriculum is well planned and includes a good balance of adult-led activities and those initiated by children. As children work and play together they learn to share, make friends and establish routines; most behave well and are keen to learn. Children are well taught and good use is made of assessment information. Children have opportunities to use the outdoor areas where they can explore, for example, they collect autumn leaves which inspire their art. They mix colours to reflect those seen outdoors and talk about why they have chosen these colours. The school is striving to improve the outdoor provision so that it will provide a better extension to the indoor classroom. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because early assessment highlights their needs.

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

Parents are very positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children. A very large majority of parents feel that their children are kept safe and are pleased with their children's progress. Some parents took time to add comments to the questionnaire they returned to reinforce the strength of their positive views and these were endorsed by inspection evidence. There was also a very small minority of parents who raised concerns about the quality of teaching, their children's progress and the class arrangements for last year. A small number of parents also commented that they were pleased with teaching arrangements this term. As the school is no longer in a deficit budget and has a rising roll, it can afford to reinstate four classes. The quality of teaching and pupil's progress during the inspection was found to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Carnforth Christ Church, Church of England, Voluntary Aided 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 inspector received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 98 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	42	27	51	4	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	45	29	55	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	12	40	77	4	8	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	27	29	56	6	12	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	14	27	35	67	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	25	34	64	4	8	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	40	26	50	4	8	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)	11	23	24	50	8	17	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	27	31	61	2	4	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	13	35	74	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	19	35	66	6	11	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	10	20	29	57	8	16	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	25	32	60	6	11	2	4

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.



Inspection of Carnforth Christ Church, Church of England, Voluntary Aided Primary School, Carnforth, LA5 9LJ

I am writing to thank you for making the other inspector and I feel so welcome when we visited recently to inspect your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and have good memories of how friendly you were. Most of you behave well. We were also impressed by your good understanding of how to keep healthy and the lovely food you grow in the garden. It was good to see that you raise funds for charity and help so much in your community.

I enjoyed watching how effectively you learn in your classrooms and outside too. The school provides a wide range for activities for you, which you find interesting. Teachers work very hard to help you learn and I think that teaching in your school is good. The curriculum is good too. Adults know you well and you feel confident that they will help you if you have any worries.

I have asked your teachers to add extra comments when they mark your work so that you know what you have to do in the next stages of your work, and to challenge some of you even more so that you can reach higher levels. I have also asked the governors to make sure that they have tighter systems in place for checking how well the school is providing for you all.

I was really pleased to tell your headteacher that your school is a good school. Well done and I hope you all continue to work hard and continue to enjoy school.

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