

Wheatley Lane Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119702
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339509
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Megan Dumbleton
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Kroukamp
Date of previous school inspection	5 January 2007
School address	Wheatley Lane Road Fence Burnley BB12 9ED
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies, school development plans and the school improvement partner's reports. A total of 62 parent questionnaires were received, analysed and considered, alongside 99 questionnaires completed by the pupils and 12 completed by the staff.

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

- progress and attainment for all groups of pupils, especially the more able
- the assessment of pupils' progress and how well that information is used in planning lessons
- how well key skills of literacy and numeracy are applied across the curriculum and the provision for the more able pupils
- how far the school has progressed since the previous inspection and the effectiveness of leadership and management in sustaining the recent improvements in attainment and achievement.

Information about the school

Pupils at this average size school come from the village of Fence and nearby towns. The take-up of free school meals is well below average and the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A below average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Reception class. The school has gained the Design, Active Sports and Healthy Schools Quality Marks and accreditation from Investors in People.

A private provider offers after-school sessions on site as well as holiday care. This provision is subject to a separate inspection and receives a separate report.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Wheatley Lane provides a satisfactory quality of education and pupils' personal development is good. Staff provide good care and pastoral support to pupils. There has been a concerted effort to boost pupils' achievement, with the headteacher, school leaders and governors making effective use of advice and support from the local authority. As a result, pupils' attainment is improving and their progress accelerating. These improvements and the school leaders' clear vision and ambition for the future demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They benefit from an interesting range of activities indoors, but facilities and the curriculum for learning in the outdoor areas are under-developed. Pupils' attainment is above average by Year 6. Throughout the school, achievement is satisfactory although the rate of progress varies between classes. It is generally good in Years 1 and 6 but slower in the other year groups. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good and outstanding practice. There are times, however, when the more able pupils are not stretched fully, especially in mathematics lessons. The satisfactory curriculum includes French and a good allocation of time for creative work and physical development. Staff are beginning to link subjects together to provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to practice their key skills, such as those in writing.

Senior leaders carry out evaluations of provision and of pupils' achievement so that the school has an accurate view of its performance. The role of the key subject leaders in monitoring teaching and learning is insufficiently developed and some improvements are not consistently embedded. At present, there are too few opportunities for the best practitioners in school to influence the practice of colleagues by sharing their expertise and flair.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they are keen to learn. In responses to the questionnaire, they overwhelmingly agreed that they enjoyed school and felt safe. Pupils have a good understanding of the essential features of a healthy lifestyle and appreciate the good range of visits, after-school clubs and sporting competitions that give them new interests and enjoyment. A good programme for personal education, alongside strong links with the church, support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress by:

- ensuring that the more able pupils are fully challenged in all lessons, especially in mathematics
- ensuring that the improvements in teaching and learning are implemented consistently in all classes
- providing opportunities for staff to share and learn from, the best practice in school.
- Improve the rigour and effectiveness of the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that the work of key staff is consistent throughout the school.
- Develop the outdoor area and the curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage, so that children have continuous opportunities throughout the day, for purposeful play and exploration in the fresh air.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory overall, and it is often good in Years 1 and 6. Attainment has improved and is above average. In addition, aspects of pupils' personal development are good.

Pupils generally make good progress in Year 1, but this slows in Year 2 to produce a satisfactory pattern of achievement across Key Stage 1. Progress in reading and writing is better than in mathematics, especially for the more able pupils. For the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2, attainment has improved this year, reversing a recent decline. Progress in writing has shown a marked improvement, with all Year 6 pupils reaching the expected level in the 2009 English tests. Attainment for the more able has improved with an above average proportion attaining the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science. A similar picture of good achievement is seen in the current Year 6 group, but progress across the other age groups is variable and satisfactory overall. In some instances, the more able pupils are stretched to the full, but there are occasions when teachers' expectations of this group are not high enough and pupils do not perform as well as they could, especially in mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities meet their individual targets and have good self-esteem. Boys and girls show the same interest in their work and progress at equal rates.

Pupils say they enjoy school and feel happy. Behaviour is good, attendance is above average and pupils are punctual. Harmonious relationships exist and older pupils take good care of younger children. Pupils' good understanding of healthy living means that they enjoy plenty of exercise. For example, the dance, multi-skills and gymnastics clubs are all well attended. Pupils assert that bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly. The 'building bridges' project helps pupils to develop respect for cultures and beliefs that are different from their own. However, the school provides them with little opportunity to engage with people from different backgrounds, outside their immediate community. Pupils have good opportunities to experience responsibility and help in the running of the school. For example, the school captains encourage good team work and school council members represent pupils' views in the process of decision making. Pupils enjoy

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

community involvement through links with the church, local events, charity fundraising and environmental work. Above average attainment and industrious attitudes prepare pupils well for the next phase of education. In addition, opportunities to work on enterprise projects help to develop early workplace skills.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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?

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good and outstanding practice. Managers recognise that the overall quality of teaching needs to improve further in order for the school to reach its own challenging targets. Teachers make the purpose of lessons clear so that pupils know exactly what is expected. Although many improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, they are not all consistently embedded. Learning is assessed frequently and teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Tasks are planned to challenge pupils of different abilities and to help them meet their targets. However, there are occasions when the more able pupils are not extended enough. For example, in mathematics, they might be given slightly harder tasks, but not challenged fully through problem solving or investigational work. In some

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

lessons, pupils sit listening to the teacher for too long and this reduces the amount of time for independent work. There are good examples of teachers' marking and advice given to help pupils improve their work, but again, this is not consistent across all classes. Experienced teaching assistants provide effective, targeted support for individuals and groups of pupils who need extra help.

The satisfactory curriculum has some strengths. A strong emphasis on creative subjects leads to some good work, for example, in art, design and music. The good provision for personal education supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Links between subjects are developing, with increasing opportunities for pupils to write at length when studying subjects such as history or geography. Special group work and individual tuition effectively support pupils who need extra help. A programme for gifted or talented pupils is in the developmental stage. More able pupils are not always challenged well enough in mathematics. Pupils take good advantage of an interesting programme of extra-curricular clubs and competitive sport. The benefit of these activities, together with a good programme for physical education, is recognised through the Activemark award. Visits, including a residential, help to extend pupils' experiences and broaden their horizons. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the curriculum for learning in the outdoor areas is underdeveloped.

The quality of care, guidance and support offered to pupils is good. In replies to the questionnaire and conversations held, there is overwhelming agreement by pupils that 'adults in school care about me'. Staff go to great lengths to secure specialist support, for example, from social, educational and medical agencies, to meet individual pupils' needs. Children have a smooth induction into the Reception class and pupils are well supported in the transition to their secondary schools. The buildings and grounds are secure and there is a safe hand-over of younger pupils to parents at the end of the day. Supervision at break times is well organised, but the playground is sometimes crowded, with little space for energetic ball games.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior managers provides clear direction for the school and both staff and governors share the agenda for long-term improvement. The equalities policy ensures that groups of pupils have full and equal access to all activities. The more able, however, do not consistently have the challenge they need in all lessons. The strengthened middle

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

management team have driven through improvements in provision which are leading to better progress and attainment. However, the role of the subject managers in checking on and supporting teaching and learning is not developed fully. The actions taken to promote community cohesion are satisfactory and some good links exist with the local community. For example, residents enjoyed the recent celebrations to commemorate the school's 150th anniversary. A new policy is in place and recognises the need to develop pupils' engagement with groups outside the local area further and to explore links with communities around the world.

The school represents satisfactory value for money and is efficiently run on a day-to-day basis. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. Governance is satisfactory. Governors play an active role in school improvement planning and have a secure overview of attainment and achievement. However, they acknowledge that they could be even more rigorous in monitoring all their statutory responsibilities.

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	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's development on entering the Reception class has been above average in the past but is average for the present group. Their progress is satisfactory overall, and often good in early number and language work. Personal and social development is a strength and children's behaviour is good.

Children's progress is assessed frequently and tasks are planned effectively to build on developing knowledge and skills. In some parts of the day, children have short, focused group sessions with an adult and then are free to choose from an interesting range of

activities where they practise and consolidate their new learning. This often promotes good progress. However, at other times children learn together as a class and have fewer opportunities to engage with the teacher or for active learning. As a result, progress is slower. Adults use the school grounds effectively. For example, some children went on a web hunt and drew patterns in the wet grass. The classroom has two outdoor areas, but only the very small one is securely fenced and suitable for use during free-choice times. A lack of space here restricts the range of opportunities for purposeful play and exploration outdoors. In addition, the activities that are arranged are not always integrated into the main theme and so do not provide enough opportunities for children to practise and apply the skills they are learning. Management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and safeguarding for this age group is also satisfactory. Leaders have a realistic view of the strengths in provision and learning and what needs improving.

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

Parents have a positive view of the school. The vast majority of those who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children's experience of Wheatley Lane is a happy one. They commend the teachers who they describe as 'committed' and value the links with the church and local community. Inspectors agree with their views. Quotes include 'the children's behaviour is exemplary' and 'my child looks forward to learning new things and is well motivated'. In their written comments, a few parents raised issues about communications between home and school, the way that the school takes account of their concerns and the amount of help they are given to support their children's learning. Inspection found these areas to be satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Wheatley Lane Methodist 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	66	22	32	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	69	20	29	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	37	35	51	4	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	43	33	49	4	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	36	53	30	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	28	41	32	47	4	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	57	25	37	2	3	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)	28	41	30	44	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	49	28	41	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	37	37	54	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	32	37	54	4	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	35	35	51	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	56	26	38	1	1	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 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Wheatley Lane Methodist Voluntary Aided Primary School, Lancashire.
BB12 9ED

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. In return, I would like to tell you what we found out.

Wheatley Lane is a happy school that provides you with a satisfactory education. Your behaviour is good and you get on very well together. You are a credit to your families and to your school. I think those of you on the school council, the eco-warriors and others with responsibilities do a good job in helping to run the school day and make decisions. It is good to see how you care for local wildlife and your plans to grow your own vegetables sound exciting.

You are keen to learn and work hard. In Years 1 to 6, you are now making better progress than in the past and have improved your work. Well done! I think you can do even better, especially those of you who find your work easier than most. I have, therefore, asked your teachers to give you some extra challenges and to check that you have the best possible help with your learning. You can help by continuing to work hard. I have also asked that leaders tighten up the way they check on how well you are being taught and that the best bits are shared across the school so that everything improves. Those of you in Reception have settled well and are learning to be independent. I have asked your teachers to provide more opportunities for you to learn outside. I think you will enjoy that because I saw how much you enjoyed your activities in the fresh air.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us share your work and play. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector

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