

Preston St Matthew's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119603
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	354375
Inspection dates	15–16 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	427
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon D Walkden
Headteacher	Mr R Small
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons, saw 11 teachers and held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at lesson planning, pupils' books, safeguarding arrangements, school policies, national data, the school's data and plans for future developments. Questionnaires returned by staff, pupils and 114 from parents and carers were scrutinised.

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

- the progress of different groups of pupils
- how effectively teaching challenges pupils, particularly those who are more able
- the effectiveness of the recently modified curriculum in meeting the needs of all pupils and in boosting their attainment and progress
- the quality of management of teaching and learning.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most. The majority of the pupils are of Indian or Pakistani heritage, and most speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.

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 good school successfully fulfils its stated aim 'to promote the academic, emotional and spiritual growth of every pupil'. Excellent care, guidance and support ensure pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Pupils of all cultural backgrounds mix happily in this harmonious community and one pupil commented, 'School is like a big family.'

Achievement is good and attainment is broadly average. Good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning contribute strongly to academic progress and personal development. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils progress well throughout the school because teaching is good. In English, writing is not as strong because many pupils have limited language skills. Actions to boost attainment in writing are taking time to have a full impact. Attendance is average, but a small minority of pupils do not attend regularly and this hinders their progress.

Challenging tasks and teachers' high expectations for pupils stimulate them to aim higher. Good-quality assessment systems give an accurate picture of progress, and pupils say teachers' marking shows them how to improve their work. Recent imaginative curriculum developments have really captured pupils' enthusiasm and enriched their experiences, including visits out of school and learning Spanish. Arrangements for equal opportunities successfully ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language progress at the same rate as their classmates. Good partnerships, for example with other schools and the local university, bring extension activities for pupils with particular abilities or talents and help raise the aspirations of all pupils.

All leaders and managers are involved in rigorous self-evaluation, resulting in a clear vision for improvement. Consequently, a new curriculum has been introduced which has boosted progress, and an increasing number of pupils are attaining higher levels in English and mathematics. Ambitious plans for further development are well supported by challenging targets and ongoing professional development. There is good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - extending the good practices in language development used with younger pupils to improve oral skills throughout the school
 - helping pupils to improve the organisation of their writing to develop a wider vocabulary and to enrich their written work.

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- Build on the good relationships with parents and carers to ensure all pupils attend regularly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Good relationships throughout the school mean pupils cooperate well with staff and with each other. They are enthusiastic learners, listen well in lessons and work hard, taking care to present their work neatly. This contributes strongly to their progress, which was good in most of the lessons observed. Pupils say lessons are fun and they enjoy the varied learning activities, such as those based on The Dragons Den.

Lesson observations, assessment records and the work in pupils' books show that all groups progress well from their well below average starting points. The school's data and assessment records show that rigorous actions have remedied the dip in attainment in 2009. These included a strong focus on improving pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems. In English, pupils' writing skills are weaker than their reading skills. Many have a limited vocabulary with which to enrich their written work and find it difficult to organise and express their ideas. Actions to overcome this are proving slower to have a full impact.

Pupils are friendly, helpful and greet visitors politely. They know the importance of exercise and diet in staying healthy and enjoy gaining points for healthy choices at lunchtimes. They have good awareness of how to stay safe on the busy local roads or when using the internet. They describe their school as 'a safe and calm place', think school rules are fair and are keen to earn free time through the 'Good to be Green' system. A 'worry box' in their classroom enables them to share any difficulties with their teacher, confident that staff will help if any problems arise. Councillors and play leaders make a valuable contribution to school life, organising recycling, looking after younger pupils, ensuring the stairs are used safely and monitoring the 'quiet garden' at lunchtimes. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are keen to help others in the wider community. Visits to schools in contrasting locations extend pupils' knowledge of other ways of life. The imaginative curriculum provides a broad range of cultural experiences, including theatre visits, sports and the arts. Their academic and personal skills give pupils a satisfactory basis for the future.

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.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

High-quality relationships contribute strongly to pupils' enjoyment of school so they take a pride in their learning and make good progress. Most lessons feature well-planned activities well matched to different needs and abilities and tasks that challenge and capture pupils' interest. Well-deployed teaching assistants provide skilled support to individuals or groups. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long, limiting pupils' opportunities to contribute, express ideas and develop their speaking skills. In partnership with the local authority, the school has developed rigorous assessment systems. These provide good-quality information on individual pupils' progress, used effectively in most classes to plan the next steps in learning and direct extra help. Marking and oral feedback give pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work and they sign the comments written in their books by their teachers to show they understand.

Imaginative curriculum themes linking subjects capture pupils' enthusiasm, give memorable experiences and have boosted progress. Careful adaptations meet pupils' differing learning needs. Basic skills are increasingly practised across the curriculum; the 'Beside the seaside' theme in Year 2 involved a visit to Lytham, writing, research on the internet and creating 3D maps. Information and communication technology is an effective learning tool, and pupils make good use of notebook computers. The personal and social education programme enables pupils to consider issues and make informed choices, for example with regard to drugs or smoking. A good range of popular clubs provide additional sports, music, dancing, arts and crafts experiences.

The school is an attractive, secure and welcoming learning environment. Pupils say they

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feel all the adults care for them and offer help and advice. Staff know pupils and their families well and often help direct them to external support agencies. Highly effective strategies identify and meet individuals' learning or emotional needs. The dedicated team of skilled professionals provides sensitive one-to-one or small-group support, for example the Rainbow class and lunchtime clubs. These have a significant impact on self-esteem, confidence, resilience and learning, particularly for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Strategies including rewards and celebrations have raised attendance and punctuality and reduced the level of persistent absence. However, a small minority of families still do not appreciate the importance of regular attendance. Very well-established systems ensure pupils move to the next stages of their education confidently.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have successfully embedded an ambition and determination to secure ongoing improvement in all aspects of school life. Challenging targets articulate this ambition and long-term development plans identify appropriate areas for improvement. The school is aware that short-term plans cover many areas and are not always as sharply focused on the main priorities as well as they could be. Senior leaders are taking action to address this. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored and checked to ensure actions and recommendations have been implemented. This is supported by good performance management procedures and professional development linked to priorities. Governors make a good contribution to driving improvement through their involvement in monitoring which equips them to challenge the school and hold it to account.

The school has effective links with parents and carers and reaches out to involve them in their children's education through workshops and courses and by providing beneficial contacts with external agencies. A good range of partnerships, including those with local schools, bring additional learning and social experiences, for example by getting involved in the Music Festival. The school's good practice is recognised and other schools make use of staff's expertise, for example their provision for the able and talented pupils. Good arrangements for equal opportunities ensure there is no discrimination and everything the school offers is available to all pupils.

Safeguarding procedures meet all requirements and pupils say they feel very safe. Child

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protection training is fully up to date for all staff, the site is fully secure and there are good working relationships with all key agencies. The school is a harmonious community, shown in one pupil's comment, 'We respect all religions.' Action plans to promote community cohesion are based on secure knowledge of the local and wider communities and analysis of the impact of these plans. Value for money is good.

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
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

Most children start school with skills at levels that are well below those typical for their age, especially in communication and language. Many have very little knowledge of English. They make good progress in all areas of learning and most reach levels in line with expectations for their age by the end of their time in Reception. Some children make excellent progress and exceed the level above those expected.

Children are very well cared for so they feel really secure, happy and keen to learn. They settle quickly into the routines of the Nursery and develop trusting relationships with all adults in the setting. Behaviour is good, children use equipment carefully, play safely and are beginning to understand how to stay healthy. Good teaching provides an imaginative range of well-planned activities through a balanced mix of those led by adults and those the children chose independently. These stimulate children's enthusiasm and tempt them to explore and investigate, both indoors and outside in the fresh air. Reception children extended their counting skills outside at the water tray, busily predicting how many marbles would sink their boats. Adults intervene sensitively and demonstrate good practice by taking every opportunity to extend and develop oral language skills. For example, in the 'home corner' they discuss familiar topics such as

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food and cooking. Good use of the skills of bilingual staff support children's language effectively. Children clearly enjoy their learning and, by the time they are in the Reception class, talk eagerly about their activities.

Highly committed leadership has established a strong team, making full use of every member's knowledge, skills and experience. Ongoing evaluation and reflection on its practice enable the team to plan strategies for improvement. Recently developed observation and assessment systems are becoming embedded, leading to a more consistent approach to measuring progress and identifying the next steps in learning.

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

About one quarter of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Their very positive responses show they are happy overall with their children's experience at the school because they enjoy school, are kept safe and make enough progress.

A few parents and carers felt their suggestions and concerns are not taken into account and that the school does not help them support their children's learning.

Inspectors found:

- an 'open door' policy enables parents and carers to meet with staff formally or informally
- the school surveys parents' and carers' views annually
- workshops and informal courses enable parents and carers to support their children's learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Preston St Matthew'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 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 427 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	54	51	45	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	59	45	39	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	42	60	53	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	38	68	60	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	53	46	54	47	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	43	55	48	8	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	45	55	48	3	3	3	3
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)	39	34	67	59	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	30	70	61	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	37	65	57	5	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	27	59	52	18	16	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	40	60	53	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	49	55	48	3	3	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.



17 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Preston St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Preston, PR1 5XB

The team would like to thank you for welcoming us when we inspected your school. A special thank you to school councillors and the other pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us. We visited your lessons, looked at your work, saw the play leaders helping you on the stairs and in the playground, and attended assembly. Watching Buggy Malone was a real treat. Well done Years 5 and Year 6; we thought you were real stars and sang brilliantly! You told us how much you enjoy school and your parents and carers are pleased that you are happy and feel safe there.

This is what we found.

- St Matthew's is a good school, with good leaders, managers and governors who take excellent care of you.
- The Nursery and Reception classes give you a good start to school life.
- You are taught well, lessons are very interesting and you make good progress.
- You behave well, and say teachers tell you how to improve your work and most of you know how well you are doing.

A few things would make the school even better. We have asked the teachers to:

- help you improve the way you organise your writing and use more interesting words, so remember to include lots of those 'wow' words!
- work with your parents and carers so you all attend school every day.

We really enjoyed our visit and hope you will continue to work hard and be happy at school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector

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