

Hurst Knoll St James' Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 106229 |
| Local Authority | Tameside |
| Inspection number | 355911 |
| Inspection dates | 23–24 March 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Geoff Yates |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 251 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Tracy Bennett |
| Headteacher | Mrs Susan Nelson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 January 2008 |
| School address | Ladbroke Road Ashton-Under-Lyne Lancashire OL6 8JS |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 11 lessons taught by eight teachers and observed a school assembly. They held discussions with the headteacher, senior staff, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and several groups of pupils. An inspector also spoke with parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school development plan, teachers' lesson plans, assessment and tracking evidence and pupils' workbooks. Eighty-one questionnaire responses from parents and carers were scrutinised as well as responses from pupils and staff.

- How effectively the school is promoting the achievement of all pupils, with a focus on writing and reading.
- How well teachers made use of assessment information in ensuring pupils know what they need to improve.
- How well the outside area is incorporated in the work done in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The effectiveness of the steps taken to improve attendance.

Information about the school

The school is of an average size for primary schools nationally. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has achieved many awards, including Healthy School status.

Issues with the school building meant that a number of pupils had to be educated off-site for a period of time. There has been some disruption in staffing since the previous inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is improving and has many good features, including the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' behaviour and the level of care the school provides. The provision made for pupils with specific difficulties in English is of a high quality. Pupils demonstrate a strong commitment to adopting healthy and safe lifestyles. They have a good understanding of the importance of taking exercise and of safety issues. Despite the limitations of an ageing building, they work and play in a happy and very caring school community of which they are proud. Parents and carers think highly of the school.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. They start school with skills below those expected for nursery age children overall. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and as a result, enter Year 1 with skills that are typical for their age. In the rest of the school, pupils' learning and progress has been variable in recent years but is now satisfactory, with examples of good progress evident across the school. Progress in developing pupils' writing skills has improved but is limited because they are not always given sufficiently challenging opportunities to use and develop their writing skills in all subjects. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has varied in the years since the previous inspection. Disruptions in staffing and by groups of pupils having to travel by bus to offsite accommodation have had a negative impact. However, overall standards in English and mathematics are now broadly average and on an upward trend.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with a wide range of interesting extra-curricular activities for pupils, which contribute to their enjoyment of school. Pupils have a good understanding of the school community and local community. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some is good but there is variability in effectiveness. For example, questioning is not always used well. The school has satisfactory assessment procedures in place to track pupils' progress. However, pupils do not always have an awareness of what they need to do to improve their own work and marking does not always provide a clear indication of what pupils need to do to improve further.

The leadership team, ably led by the headteacher, with the good support of the governing body has a clear focus on school improvement, although the school's evaluation of its performance is sometimes over-generous. There are clear improvements in reading as a result of a successful leadership initiative. This, together with the steps taken to tackle and successfully halt the falling standards of previous years, improved involvement of staff in monitoring and self-evaluation and improved links with parents and carers indicates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5

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inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards of attainment further and ensure all groups of pupils make good progress by improving the use made of questioning so that all teaching is good or better.
- Maximise the opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills well in all aspects of the curriculum.
- Improve consistency in the use of marking and target setting in order for pupils to have a very clear idea of what they need to do to improve and the steps they need to take to achieve it.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy learning and are keen to talk about what they are doing. However, their understanding of what they need to do to improve their work is variable. In lessons, pupils show a sense of real achievement when, for example, they succeed in applying their mathematical skills, when asked to work out train times. In lessons such as this, they are whole-heartedly focused on achieving their best possible work. Pupils share ideas well with one another in lessons.

Pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory, including for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' skills in writing are beginning to improve, but there are missed opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. Some pupils' progress is good, for example, those pupils who take part in the Reading Recovery programme or those who are learning English as an additional language. There is no trend in difference in the performance of boys and girls, though it does vary from year to year.

Many aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Pupils respond well to the adults with whom they interact and, as a result, are keen to take part in discussions and to offer suggestions. Pupils clearly enjoy taking on areas of responsibility and respond well to it. Pupils know right from wrong and respond well to the good opportunities provided to promote spiritual and social development. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures. Despite the strengths in their personal development, average attendance and basic skills mean that pupils' preparation for their future lives is satisfactory rather than good.

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

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 | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Pupils' attendance ¹ | 3 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good teaching was seen during the inspection. The better lessons move at a fast pace and teachers make good use of probing questions to encourage pupils to think and to express their ideas. In some lessons, pupils are required to spend too long listening to the teacher before getting on with their independent tasks and opportunities are missed to use questioning well. Pupils' work is marked carefully and some teachers give pupils good guidance on how they can improve their work, particularly in writing. However, this is not yet consistent across the school, neither is that of target setting leading to pupils making rapid progress. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning, particularly for those pupils who need extra help.

The school has made good efforts to adapt the curriculum to reflect the prior learning of pupils. The needs of the most vulnerable pupils are catered for well through the good quality individual support they receive. Information and communication technology skills are taught systematically but there are limited opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other lessons. Music provision is a particular strength. There is a good range of additional activities to enhance the curriculum but opportunities are missed for pupils to use their writing skills well in other subjects.

The level of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. There is strong support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and so they are progressing at a similar rate to their peers. School-based support for those pupils with specific language

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difficulties is particularly effective. The learning mentor has a central role in promoting pupils' self-esteem well. The breakfast club is well attended and provides a good start to the day. There are clear systems of sanctions and rewards which guide pupils' good behaviour. Good systems are in place to promote attendance and as a result, levels of attendance have risen.

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?

The school has a strong commitment to inclusion and promotes equality well. Through its caring ethos it teaches the importance of valuing each individual. As a result the school, despite the limitations of the building, is a happy and pleasant place in which to work. The headteacher, senior staff and governing body are committed to the drive to accelerate pupils' progress. They check how different groups are getting on and take well focussed action to reduce any gaps, as seen by the accelerated progress made by pupils having one-to-one tuition. Changes in staffing have contributed to recent improvements in pupils' progress. Comprehensive monitoring and evaluation by leaders result in the school's strengths and weaknesses being known, although some judgements made about effectiveness in different areas are generous.

The governing body discharges its statutory duties satisfactorily and along with the school leaders holds the school to account for its performance. There is a satisfactory range of partnerships which contribute well to the school's curricular provision and support pupils' personal needs. Leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, ensure safeguarding procedures meet requirements, with policies and guidelines for ensuring pupils' welfare. The school building and grounds provide a safe environment. The school is strongly committed to community cohesion and many aspects of it are good. However, there has been no detailed analysis of the different strands of community cohesion that impact directly on the school. As such, the provision is judged to be satisfactory rather than good. The school has worked successfully in developing its partnership with parents and carers, which is now of a good quality.

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

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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| 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 are safe and happy in a nurturing environment where learning is fun. Children make good progress, achieve well and play extremely contentedly together. In the nursery, a whole range of classroom activities linked to the work done by postmen/women really captures the children's imagination. In reception, the lack of direct access to an outdoor area is managed in a way that does not limit children's opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world around them and their physical development. For example, children very much enjoyed the water activities linked to a study of Africa in the outside area. While there is a very good balance of child initiated activities in the Reception class both inside and out, this is less so in the outside area in the nursery. Teaching throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children's progress is checked on regularly and the outcomes are used to plan activities according to individual children's needs. Parents and carers are informed about their child's progress. There are good quality, effective arrangements for ensuring that children settle quickly and smoothly into the Reception class from the nursery, especially important because of the distance between classrooms. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. They provide a clear vision for even greater success.

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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 and carers were extremely positive in their praise of what the school does, both in their responses to the questionnaires and in discussions held with an inspector. The inspection team looked into the points made by a small minority of parents and carers who disagreed with some of the questionnaire statements but felt that the school addresses the issues soundly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hurst Knoll St James' 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 251 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 43 | 53 | 37 | 46 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 45 | 56 | 35 | 43 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 42 | 52 | 37 | 46 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 44 | 54 | 34 | 42 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 39 | 48 | 39 | 48 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 35 | 43 | 44 | 54 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 33 | 41 | 43 | 53 | 5 | 6 | 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) | 32 | 40 | 44 | 54 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 31 | 38 | 44 | 54 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 24 | 30 | 49 | 60 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 23 | 28 | 49 | 60 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 26 | 32 | 47 | 58 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 33 | 41 | 47 | 58 | 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 all 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 | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



25 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hurst Knoll St James' Church of England Primary School, Ashton-Under-Lyne, OL6 8JS

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. These are some of the things we found. Saint James' is a satisfactory school. It is a happy place of learning. You are well-behaved and polite. The adults in school look after you well. You work hard in your lessons and get on well with each other and with the adults in school. The Early Years Foundation Stage gets your education off to a good start. In the rest of the school, your learning and progress are improving and standards have risen. Well done, everybody – keep up the good work!

I was so pleased to hear about how much you enjoy school. The members of the choir who took part in a concert at the local football club clearly gained a great deal from the experience. You also told us that you think the after-school activities are good. There is still some work to be done to make your school the best school it can possibly be. These are the things I have asked the headteacher and the staff to do.

- Make sure that all teaching is good or better.
- Improve the way they use targets and improve marking so that you know more about how well you are doing and about what you need to do to improve your work.
- Give you more opportunities to use your writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

You can help with all of these things by continuing to try hard.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Yates

Lead Inspector

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