

St John with St Michael Church of England Primary School, Shawforth

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119690
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379871
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Wall

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	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Greg Entwistle
Headteacher	Beverly Holmes
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Wall

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent approximately 240 minutes observing lessons taught by seven members of staff, two of whom were teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) was observed and a selection of pupils' workbooks was also scrutinised. The inspector observed collective worship and pupils' behaviour at break times and around the school. The inspector held meetings with members of staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector looked at a range of school documentation including: safeguarding records and policies; minutes of the meetings of the governing body; school assessment and tracking data; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning; records relating to behaviour; and attendance data. In addition, questionnaires returned by 34 parents and carers were analysed, as well as the questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above that found in most schools nationally. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage; none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum government expectations for attainment and progress. Since the previous inspection there has been a significant number of staffing changes, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher. The school provides and manages a before-school breakfast-club and after-school care for a small number of children.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. An excellent range of enrichment activities has a highly positive impact on pupils’ attitudes and behaviour, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well. The school is not yet outstanding because teaching and achievement are good, rather than outstanding.
- Pupils make good progress as they move up through the school because teaching is good and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs also make good progress because of the effective support they receive.
- Teachers prepare their lessons well and plan a good variety of activities to keep pupils interested and engaged in their learning. Teaching makes good use of information and communication technology (ICT) and has a sharp focus on pupils’ learning and progress. However, there are a few shortcomings. For example, tasks are not always matched closely enough to pupils’ abilities and teachers do not always use questioning to best effect to deepen and extend pupils’ learning.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils are invariably courteous, polite and respectful towards each other and the adults working with them. Pupils have high levels of self-confidence and many are mature beyond their age. Pupils say how very safe they feel in school. They say that bullying is extremely rare and is effectively dealt with by the adults working with them. Attendance is above average.
- Leaders and managers evaluate the school’s effectiveness accurately and use the outcomes astutely to drive improvement. Performance management is used effectively to set targets linked to improvement. Issues for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have been tackled rigorously, especially weaker teaching in Key Stage 1, where pupils now make good progress. The governing body is knowledgeable and very supportive and holds the school effectively to account.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that pupils are always appropriately challenged according to their abilities
 - questioning is always used effectively to encourage pupils to justify and expand on their contributions in lessons and thus extend their learning
 - ensuring that pupils always get on with learning independently as soon as they are ready, especially higher-attaining pupils.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

In lessons pupils are very enthusiastic, contribute eagerly and show exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They work effectively in groups and pairs, where they listen respectfully to other pupils' contributions. They enjoy working independently. However, occasionally more-able pupils spend too long listening to teachers explaining tasks when they are ready, eager and able to tackle tasks on their own; this acts as a brake on their progress. Pupils enjoy challenge and work with great determination to solve problems. Sometimes, however, tasks are not pitched at the right level of difficulty to match pupils' needs or abilities.

Pupils start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of attainment that are generally below age-related expectations. However, the small number of pupils in each cohort results in variation from one year to the next and leads to variation in attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is good and activities are well-managed and stimulating. As pupils move up through the school they continue to make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is average. Attainment in mathematics and reading has generally been higher than in writing. However, the gap is closing rapidly and securely because leaders and managers are successfully providing more focused activities to encourage pupils to develop their writing skills. Furthermore, teachers are identifying and targeting specific weaknesses in writing much more effectively. Pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points because of the effective support they receive. Similarly, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals benefit from the school's effective promotion of equality of opportunity and also make good progress.

Pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment in reading is broadly average. Pupils say they enjoy reading outside school and younger pupils say that they enjoy reading regularly at home with their parents and carers. Boys comment very positively on the good supply of interesting books available for them in the library and classrooms.

Parents and carers are unanimous in believing that their children make good progress, a view that is fully supported by inspection findings.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. It makes good use of the facilities both indoors and outdoors to provide a stimulating range of learning activities. There is a good balance between teacher-led activities and those children initiate and control themselves. The Early Years Foundation Stage develops positive attitudes and prepares children well for future learning.

Good teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 builds securely on these firm foundations. Previous shortcomings in the quality of teaching have been tackled rigorously and this is bringing about a positive impact on accelerating pupils' progress. Teaching benefits from a well-designed curriculum. Topic work and frequent visits to places of interest are used effectively to capture pupils' interest and provide them with a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills across subjects. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 used ICT with impressive facility to research, write about and illustrate a recent educational visit to Skipton Castle.

Teachers forge exceptionally strong relationships with their classes. Through their strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm they act as strong role models for pupils' social and moral development and promote outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning. Teachers use assessment information increasingly effectively to match tasks to the needs, ages and abilities of pupils. However, the level of challenge is sometimes not high enough for more-able pupils and this acts as a brake on their progress. Teachers plan their lessons well to include a variety of activities that keep pupils actively engaged in their learning. Pupils enjoy working independently, especially in pairs and small groups. However, more-able pupils sometimes spend too long listening to whole-class explanations when they are more than ready to work on tasks independently. Teaching makes good use of ICT to support learning. For example, a video clip played in a numeracy lesson to Year 5 and Year 6 pupils on calculating mean, median and average values not only engaged the pupils' interest fully but brought great clarity to their understanding and promoted rapid progress. While some teaching uses questioning effectively, sometimes opportunities are missed to pose probing questions that make pupils think deeply and justify their answers. Teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils who are disabled and those who have special educational needs, resulting in their good overall progress. Reading is taught effectively and this enables pupils to make good progress in their literacy skills.

Parents, carers and pupils are overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of teaching. Inspection findings support their opinion.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is an exceptionally harmonious, well-ordered and happy community. Staff know all pupils exceptionally well and the school is highly effective in caring for and meeting the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. As a result they are fully included and make good progress. Parents and carers are unanimous in their strongly-held view that behaviour gives no cause for concern and that children are safe and cared for exceptionally well. School records show that over time there have been very few incidents of poor behaviour and many of these relate to minor incidents only. There have been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions and no racist incidents. Pupils say that lessons are hardly ever disrupted by poor behaviour. 'We rarely have time to misbehave in lessons and even if we did we would not want to let our teacher or our classmates down', is a telling pupil

comment. Pupils say that bullying of any kind is very rare and that it is dealt with quickly and effectively if it occurs. Pupils are exceptionally aware of the need to respect others who may be different or whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Pupils say how very safe they feel in school and that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Pupils are acutely aware of what constitute unsafe situations and how to avoid or cope with them. Since the previous inspection attendance has improved significantly because the school has made attendance a priority and because pupils' enjoyment of school is growing strongly.

The breakfast-club and after-school provision is well managed and takes place in a safe and well-supervised environment. A good range of appropriate activities is provided.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers, including the governing body, provide the school with a sharp focus on improvement. Strategic planning is of good quality and is founded firmly on tackling issues identified as relative weaknesses as a result of accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness. For example, the use of assessment to track pupils' progress towards increasingly demanding targets has been sharpened. The monitoring of teaching and learning, the use of targeted professional development and procedures for managing performance have also been made more rigorous. This is resulting in significant overall improvement, although leaders and managers recognise that more teaching needs to be outstanding to accelerate pupils' progress at an even faster pace. The maintenance of good achievement and improvements in the quality of teaching and attendance since the previous inspection demonstrate the school's good capacity to continue its upward trend.

Leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and supports pupils' good achievement effectively. The range of enrichment activities is outstanding. They include, for example, a five-day visit to London for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and whole-school participation in a marathon run. Pupils appreciate being heavily involved in many aspects of the school's development. For example, pupils are closely involved in selecting new reading books and meet regularly with publishing representatives to that end. The wealth of such activities, the school's exceptionally strong Christian ethos and regular exchange visits with an ethnically-diverse primary school promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development outstandingly well.

The school's effectiveness in promoting equality of opportunity is seen in the good progress made by all pupils. Leaders and managers promote successfully a school ethos of respect for all in which discrimination in any form is neither evident nor tolerated.

Procedures for safeguarding fully meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



24 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John with St Michael Church of England Primary School, Shawforth, Rochdale, OL12 8EP

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently.

You go to a good school. I was very impressed with how proud you are of your school and how well you all get on together. Your school provides you with a wealth of memorable experiences such as the many trips you go on, including the trip to London and activities such as the marathon run and the Chairman's Competition. These activities mean that you enjoy school greatly and have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. This is seen in your above-average attendance – well done! Your behaviour and your personal development are both outstanding.

The teaching you receive is good. Adults work very hard to help you to learn, with the result that you all make good progress and achieve well. In order to help you make even better progress, I am asking your school to make sure that more teaching is outstanding by:

- always making sure that the activities you do in lessons are challenging enough
- using questioning more effectively to get you to give reasons for your answers and deepen your understanding
- making sure that those of you who are the quickest learners get on with activities in lessons as soon as you are ready and spend less time listening to explanations.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school to help it continue to improve.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall
Lead inspector

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