



Leyland Methodist Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119400
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280542
Inspection dates 27 April 2006 to 28 April 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs June Tracey

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Canberra Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Leyland
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Lancashire, PR25 3ET
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 423694
Number on roll	269	Fax number	01772 451272
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Dennis Lewis
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Michael Graham

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Leyland Methodist Junior School is a popular school. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds. No pupil has English as an additional language. Attainment on entry was broadly average for the oldest pupils, now in Year 6; it was higher in subsequent year groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Leyland Methodist Junior School is a good school, and this judgement agrees with the school's own view. It works effectively within the local community and provides good value for money. Pupils participate enthusiastically in enriching activities that broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations. Parents endorse the view that the school provides an ethos that makes learning enjoyable for their children. Overall, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well and make good progress because their learning is underpinned by good teaching and well-planned systems of support and guidance. However, the absence of a whole-school teaching and learning policy results in some exemplary practice not being shared as widely as it could be. Standards are above those expected for pupils' age in Year 6 but there is scope for further improvement in English, particularly for the higher attaining pupils and in boys' writing.

The school is well led and managed. This contributes significantly to pupils' all-round personal development and to the spirit of camaraderie that pervades the school's environment. The school evaluates its work accurately, and well-chosen priorities have been identified for further improvement. The leadership team and governors are managing and reviewing the school's systems well. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in assessment procedures and in standards in English. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards further in English by continuing to focus on boys' writing and the attainment of the most able pupils.
- Implement a whole-school policy for teaching and learning so that expectations are defined clearly in writing for all teachers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average overall in Year 6 compared with those expected for pupils' age. In the last four years, this has been mirrored in results in national tests and in comparison with local and national averages. Results vary between subjects at the higher Level 5, with more able pupils achieving better in mathematics and science than in English. Boys' writing has been identified as an aspect for improvement. The school is working with a cluster of schools to develop strategies that focus on motivating boys to write accurately and imaginatively. The positive effect of this initiative was evident during the inspection, for example, in individual pieces of boys' poetry.

Pupils achieve well. In Year 6, they take on a good degree of responsibility for their own learning, which accelerates progress in this year group. The targets set by the governors are attainable, but demanding; they are firmly based on pupils' prior attainment and realistic expectations of their progress over time. The school achieved its targets in 2005, except in English at the higher level.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make consistently good progress throughout the school. Effective strategies, including excellent use of well-trained teaching assistants, enable them to learn well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school is a close-knit and harmonious community; its Christian ethos and values permeate and underpin the provision. Pupils are happy and safe, they like coming to school and they enjoy learning. 'This is a great school and the teachers are kind and helpful' was a refrain often heard during the inspection. Pupils are confident and articulate and they work and play well together. Behaviour in and around school is excellent and there is an absence of bullying. Parents are supportive and they appreciate what the school achieves. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good. Pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is excellent; it shines through in their expectations of themselves, each other and the school. Pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and to take part in sporting activities and outdoor education. They accept responsibility willingly, the older children acting as mentors to younger ones and year groups electing representatives to the school council. Pupils say their views are listened to and that they influence school improvement, for example, in the recent purchase of a range of outdoor play equipment and in the provision of a quiet area at break times. There are many instances of pupils actively contributing to the community in which they live through fund-raising activities and interaction with local people. The pupils' good basic skills and personal qualities are providing them with a secure foundation for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, partly because teachers make good use of information from assessment to indicate what pupils need to do to improve their work further. Regular checks are made on pupils' progress towards their individual targets. Teachers focus sharply on the steady development of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT). These are interwoven successfully into the work across the whole curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to think systematically and they are provided with plenty of opportunities to transfer skills from one subject to another.

Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' capabilities. Overall, they challenge pupils of all abilities with work at suitable levels. Pupils respect teachers and teaching assistants because their expectations are realistic. Pupils' work is marked rigorously; follow-up is usually through one-to-one discussion. Pupils like this because they can talk through their own specific problems.

Pupils talked convincingly about their progress and which methods of learning they felt helped them most. They said that they enjoyed finding things out for themselves but implied that in subjects such as English and mathematics they liked lessons that were structured with intermittent input from the teacher to check on progress. This was evident in the lessons observed; pupils were seen to gain in confidence from reassurance and success, however small.

Teachers approach their work professionally. It is properly influenced by issues raised through self-evaluation. Teachers' individual approaches to planning and teaching strategies are effective within each year group but the absence of a whole-school teaching and learning policy leads to exemplary practice not being shared as widely as it could be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. National strategies and guidelines are used to ensure that learning is steadily built upon year by year. There is sound provision for pupils to use ICT in their learning. The latest technology, such as interactive whiteboards, is being introduced gradually as teachers gain expertise in its use. Health education is good, as is the provision made for citizenship. In all subjects, there is a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Good use is made of the community's resources to extend the curriculum. In a Year 4 science lesson, for example, the teacher and visitors from industry worked alongside the pupils to satisfy their inquisitiveness about electricity, both with respect for its safe use and as a source of energy in the home and as a national commodity. Pupils enjoy and participate well in a wide variety of outings, especially the residential visits and adventurous activities for older pupils. This rich range of additional activities promotes pupils' physical and creative development, extends their interests and increases their eagerness to learn.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's provision in these areas is outstanding. There are excellent arrangements for dealing with child protection issues, which are known and used appropriately by all staff. The school works closely with a range of external agencies to safeguard the welfare of pupils. Due regard is given to all aspects of health and safety and, when needed, risk assessments are undertaken meticulously. Pupils say that they know an adult in school who they would turn to if they needed advice or help on personal or academic matters. Outstanding care and attention are given to vulnerable individuals, one mother praising the school for 'the sensitivity shown to my son's needs and the time given to meeting them'. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported effectively by teachers and the teaching assistants; as a result, they make good progress in their learning and personal development. There are very good links with the infant school and with the secondary schools to ease the transition between the different phases. The school has a rigorous system for tracking pupils' progress and for providing support when weaknesses are uncovered.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The strong Christian ethos emanating from the leadership is central to the school's work; it has a marked influence on every aspect of school life. The school's self-evaluation incorporates the views of those who share in the school's life, as providers or receivers. It identifies accurately the areas for development. The effect of new initiatives, such as the flexible use of increased support in the classroom from teaching assistants, is being monitored carefully by the management team. This investment in people contributes to the outstanding level of care for individual pupils and to the good value for money judgement. Teachers are well supported in their professional development through a good system of performance management that leads to training and workshops in topics that relate to the school's priorities for improvement.

High priority is being given to the management of changes resulting from the headteacher's retirement later this term. Currently, the management of subjects is satisfactory overall. Provision is mostly managed well, such as in mathematics, ICT, physical education and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities but the school is without a subject leader for literacy, which inhibits more rapid improvement in English. Governors are supportive and fulfil their responsibilities well. Some are relatively new and are conscious of the need to extend their training further.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection and has the capacity to improve still further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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To the pupils of:

Leyland Methodist Junior School

Canberra Road

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Lancashire

PR25 3ET

28 April 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for giving us such a warm welcome when we visited your school this week.

We think that your school is a good school. There are a number of reasons for this, which we found out by talking to you and by observing lessons to see how you responded to your teachers. The things that we thought were really good were:

the way you all contribute to the life of the school by making your views known through the school council

your good response in lessons to the guidance of your teachers

your behaviour and the responsible way you carry out the specific duties allocated to you

your enthusiasm and active participation in the many activities provided for you outside of lessons

your confidence in the school to keep you safe.

There are a few things that we have asked your school to do to help you achieve even better. We have asked your teachers to share with each other those styles of teaching that help you to learn best. You must play your part too, for instance, by responding to your teachers' encouragement to improve your writing even more. This will help you to reach equally high standards in English to those you achieve in mathematics and science.

We were very impressed by your pride in the school and the sincerity with which you talked about the happy school community.

Best wishes to you all for a successful future

June Tracey (Lead inspector), Shirley Herring and Brian Dower