



Great Preston VC CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134913
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 294217
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Hartley HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Preston Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Great Preston, Leeds
Age range of pupils	5–11		West Yorkshire LS26 8AR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2146816
Number on roll (school)	207	Fax number	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev J Sykes
		Headteacher	Mr Tim Bean
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 5–11	Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006	Inspection number 294217
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Great Preston VC C of E Primary School is situated in Great Preston, a former mining village on the eastern outskirts of Leeds. The school opened in September 2005 after the closure of the former village infant and junior schools. However, until building programmes to accommodate all the pupils on one site are completed, the school is operating on both the previous school sites, a quarter of a mile distance from each other, under the leadership of one headteacher. Nearly all the pupils live locally in a mixture of housing, including many long established families in the community. Seven per cent of the pupils do not have English as their first language. Of the 207 pupils on roll, 47 have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although none has a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is low at 10%. There is no Nursery provision within the school, although there are several local day-care providers from which many, though not all, of the children enter the Reception class.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The popularity and the trust placed in Great Preston VC C of E Primary School by parents and the community at large is well founded. The pupils reach satisfactory standards overall, including in the Foundation Stage, and most make satisfactory progress in their learning; they are well-cared for; show good attitudes to learning; and are well behaved. The staff work hard and know their responsibilities, and the headteacher has established effective management and organisational structures throughout the school. However, that is only part of the picture.

The school's achievements have to be seen against the backcloth of a raft of difficulties caused by the closure of the two former schools and the re-opening of a single school in September 2005. Occasions when all the pupils can unite are very rare because of the distance between the sites; the infant and junior teachers still work in their old separate buildings; subject leadership has to be shared; and the headteacher, despite his efficiency, spends much time going to and fro the quarter mile between the buildings. The plan to be accommodated on one site has been delayed adding further stresses to an already difficult situation.

It is, therefore, to the great credit of the headteacher that he has not allowed these difficulties to overshadow the principle task of welding the two previous schools into one; finding out what needs to be done to raise standards and establishing a management structure to drive ahead improvements. Nevertheless, there are some important issues to resolve. Although the teaching is satisfactory overall, more could be achieved if there was a higher level of good teaching. Standards in mathematics and writing need improvement, the accuracy of the match of work to pupils' needs is inconsistent, and the more able pupils require greater challenge. The headteacher, ably supported by the senior managers, has set out improvement measures which are already beginning to have an effect.

Taking all the circumstances into account, the school uses its resources wisely and efficiently and provides good value for money. It has already displayed that it has good capacity to improve and to reach the targets it has set itself.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in mathematics and writing, and improve the challenge for more able pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching to a consistently good level.
- Keep the roles of senior managers under review, particularly those of key stage coordinators.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall, although there are variations between key stages and pupils do better in some subjects than others. Most of the

children enter the Foundation Stage with average levels of attainment, although some children display weak communication, social and physical skills. They make steady progress towards the early learning goals and by the end of the Foundation Stage standards are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils continue to make progress and by the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with national expectations, except in reading where they exceed them. However, the number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was very low and none were awarded Level 3 in mathematics or writing.

Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 have shown an improving picture for the last three years. There has been a steady improvement in English results, which are now above average, and the school has maintained high standards in science. However in mathematics, standards have been consistently lower than the other subjects and have only this year reached national expectations. Standards for the higher attaining pupils are well below those expected in English and mathematics. A common feature in both key stages is that boys generally do better than girls in the national tests.

The pupils make satisfactory progress in their lessons, although a significant number of higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they could because there is insufficient challenge in the work. However, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good quality support for them and they often achieve at the national level.

The school has acted quickly to bring about improvement. There are increasing examples of work that is better matched to pupils' abilities in lessons, and the causes of disappointing mathematics results have been identified and pupils are now making better progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and their well-being are promoted well. The school successfully creates a safe and happy learning environment and is committed to treating every child with respect. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and as a result, pupils enjoy coming to school and say they feel safe and well cared for by adults. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of good quality. The spiritual and caring ethos is a strong feature threading through the school community and reflects well the close links with the local church. Acts of collective worship are central to the school's work and are lively and meaningful occasions, often led by local faith leaders. The religious education programme is firmly established, and together with planned opportunities in other subjects, promote knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures. For example, Key Stage 2 pupils are taking part in a British Council sponsored project linking with schools in Zimbabwe and Namibia.

Pupils willingly take on responsibilities in school; for example, being play leaders, 'buddies' to help other children, or being members of the school council. The school council meets regularly and offers ideas about how to bring about improvements such as suggesting that soap dispensers in the cloakrooms were more hygienic and easier to use than bars of soap.

The pupils display positive attitudes to learning, behave well, and staff celebrate their efforts through reward systems. Attendance is slightly below the national average and is held down by pupils who take holidays in term time.

Pupils are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles. There is a wide range of sports clubs and activities and healthy living permeates much of school life; for examples, through lunches and a healthy tuck shop.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some which is good. Lessons are planned to a common format and are almost always suitably detailed with clear lesson aims. In most lessons the purposes of the learning are made clear to the pupils at the outset, and reviewed at the end of the lesson. Many of the lessons contain a variety of activities for the pupils sometimes linked to current topics and themes such as 'Homes' or 'Bonfire Night'. These work well and hold the pupils' interest, especially when they are taught enthusiastically, and the work spurs pupils on to greater effort. However, the potential of some lessons is spoilt by well-intentioned, but over-long, introductory sessions by the teacher which give little opportunity for all pupils to participate and also curtail the time available for them to complete activities which show how much they have learned.

The school is working hard to provide work in lessons designed to meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils. It is particularly successful for the lower attaining pupils, but less so for those who are more able. At times, the work is either too easy or too difficult, and this slows the pace at which pupils learn.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. A proper emphasis is placed on developing basic skills in the core subjects especially in literacy and science, and although standards in mathematics have been less secure, recent measures to improve matters are bearing fruit.

The curriculum provides plenty of opportunities for most groups of pupils to make progress, especially those with learning difficulties, but test data and evidence from lessons suggest that the more able could benefit from further challenge. The school has already identified this discrepancy and has a programme of measures in place to improve the provision.

The school is currently exploring ways to enrich the curriculum and make learning more meaningful to the pupils by looking at how skills in one subject can be used to help learning in another. For example, geography work about Ghana promotes writing skills, while skills in information and communication technology regularly support work

in history, science and English. Although the impact of this initiative has yet to be embedded consistently across the school, encouraging progress has been made when set against the backcloth of moulding two groups of teachers into a cohesive whole and when most subjects had previously been taught individually.

There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which enrich the curriculum. Apart from regular cultural and sporting clubs and events, which are well-attended, the school is a member of an innovative local schools partnership which not only shares out specialist teaching, for example, teaching French to Key Stage 2 pupils, but provides holiday clubs, art projects and opportunities for parents to develop their individual skills through the provision of training courses.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pupils are well cared for and the staff work hard to keep each one at the centre of their endeavours. The school has quickly established a positive climate, which is very commendable due to the physical difficulties presented by the school. Child protection procedures are robust and procedures for health and safety and risk assessments ensure the pupils' safety on the two sites and during educational visits.

Both parents and pupils display high levels of trust in the staff. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the all-round quality of education received by their children, and the range of courses provided for them to develop their own skills in supporting children at home. The school responds effectively to the needs of pupils. There are tracking procedures which enable the early identification of those who need additional help with their learning. The school is also beginning to establish learning targets for each pupil although the practice is better established in some classes than others, and not all pupils are currently involved in setting or reviewing their targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Amidst all the challenges faced by the school over the recent past caused by the creation of one school out of two and operating on two school sites, the leadership and management provided by senior managers is at least satisfactory, while that provided by the headteacher is of very good quality. The closure and opening process, with almost all the teachers being re-employed in the new school, has created major challenges for the headteacher to which he has responded with sensitivity and rigour. A carefully thought out plan to evaluate all the different working practices of the two schools and a determination to select only the best, is beginning to pay off, and there have been some early successes; for example, the planning systems used by teachers, and the adoption of 'star' books to record pupils' progress over time. The headteacher also restructured the senior management team to reflect both the practical and organisational difficulties in the school as well as responding to the learning needs of pupils through reviewing responsibilities for the curriculum. However, as time progressed, it became clear that the arrangements, which were envisaged to be for

the short term, would have to be extended. This is now placing strain on those teachers who carry a number of responsibilities. Nevertheless, all senior managers are working hard and subject leaders have achieved a good deal of consistency in a short time and there are schemes of work and policies in place throughout the school. The key stage coordinators fulfil a strong managerial and administrative role, although their impact on teaching and learning is less well developed.

The headteacher has been very well supported throughout the whole process by the local authority and the governing body. He has monitored performance at all levels, and identified aspects of the work which need to be improved, including raising standards in mathematics; challenging the more able; improving the accuracy of the match of work to the pupils' learning needs; and raising the quality of teaching to a more consistently good level. Already the measures put in place are beginning to have a positive effect, and the whole staff team is now in a strong position to build on their early gains.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I would like to say how much Mrs Frost, Mrs Flitcroft and I enjoyed spending time in your school. Thank you for being so polite and friendly and telling us about your work and what interests you.

We spent a lot of time finding out how well you are learning and by watching you work in some of the lessons and talking to Mr Bean and your teachers. Don't they do well! Showing you how to do things, and making sure you have lots of exciting things to do. At the end of the inspection we talked to Mr Bean about what we had found out. This is what we said.

We thought you were extremely well behaved children, listened carefully to your teachers, did as you were asked, and worked hard in your lessons. Even the youngest children were good at taking turns and sharing things. The older children acted responsibly, taking care of books and equipment. You told us that you enjoyed coming to school and that the adults took good care of you. You certainly seem to enjoy your work and we are pleased that you want to do well.

One of the jobs we have to do when we inspect schools like yours is to see if there are any things which could make your school even better. Of course, we couldn't think of anything you could do because you're brilliant already!

It was difficult, but we did ask Mr Bean and your teachers to see if there were any ways which they could help you do even better in your lessons, especially by giving some of you really hard work to do. aren't we awful? We know that you are all part of a brand new school even though the buildings are the same at the moment. So we had some ideas about how Mr Bean and all the staff could get ready for the time when you will all be sharing the same buildings and be one big happy family.

So, keep working hard, doing your best and enjoying your school. Remember, if I ever come to Great Preston again, I'll want to know how you are getting on!