

# Great Marsden St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119436
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	319290
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Garry Jones HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	176
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Glen Tunbridge
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lesley Fitzpatrick
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Trent Road Nelson Lancashire BB9 0NX
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 615055
<b>Fax number</b>	01282 697750

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

When Great Marsden St John's Church of England Primary School was inspected in November 2006, it was judged to require special measures. The school is of smaller than average size. It serves the town of Nelson; a community with pockets of social and economic deprivation and this is reflected in the above average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is growing, but remains well below the national and local averages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average as is the proportion with a statement for their special educational needs. The school has recently been awarded the national Healthy Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

St. John's is a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly. It already has a number of good features. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school. The expanded senior leadership team has come together well over the last twelve months to establish effective systems for monitoring, evaluating and developing the key aspects of the school's provision. The whole staff are committed to improvement and are working hard to bring this about. The result of this is that the inadequate progress that pupils were making has been remedied and the overall quality of teaching has improved. Significant staff changes and absence hindered the initial progress, but the staffing situation has been stabilised and the school should start the new school year with a full complement of staff. The governing body has also undergone a transformation. They are well informed of the strengths and priorities for development within the school. An effective committee structure is in place and the governors are supporting and challenging the school effectively. The established and proven systems for bringing about improvement and the quality of leadership at all levels illustrate good capacity for further improvement.

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good. The vast majority of pupils attend regularly and enjoy school. They get on well with each other and demonstrate that they can work well independently and in small groups. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and that there is an adult they can turn to if they face difficulties. There are few incidents of bullying and pupils report that any occurrences are dealt with promptly and effectively. They are keen to adopt healthy lifestyles in their choice of diet and by taking exercise regularly. Pupils eagerly take on positions of responsibility within the school and are keen to contribute to the local community through church events, musical productions, sporting fixtures and charity fund raising. Pupils are well looked after and there are effective systems for ensuring that new entrants settle quickly into the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage and a good range of support is provided. The performance of pupils is tracked systematically and academic guidance is good. Pupils have clear targets and receive effective guidance on how to improve through regular marking.

Pupils' standards of attainment are broadly average. They enter the school with skills that are below those expected of their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and now enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are in line with those expected at that age. Pupils make satisfactory progress to achieve broadly average standards at the end of the Key Stage 1. Satisfactory progress continues through Key Stage 2 so that pupils also attain average standards in the national tests at the end of the key stage. The progress that pupils made in the current Year 2 and Year 6 has been good and has remedied the variable progress these pupils made in earlier years. This improvement in achievement within the school reflects the satisfactory teaching pupils now receive. However, a significant amount of the teaching, particularly in English and mathematics, is now good and this is helping pupils to make up the progress that they lost in earlier years. The curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs of students, but the school is not yet fully exploiting the benefits of linking studies in different subjects together. There are opportunities to engage in a range of extra-curricular activities.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception Class) is good. Children enter school with a range of skills that overall are below what is usual for their age, particularly in language development. Consistently good teaching, which takes full account of children's individual needs, helps all to make good progress. The majority of children achieve the recommended goals in most areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The good curriculum is firmly based on purposeful, practical activities that show a good understanding of how young children learn. Recent improvements in the outdoor facilities enhance learning. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills so they settle quickly into school and develop good attitudes from an early age. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Good links are being established with parents to reinforce learning.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of all teaching is as good as the best within the school.
- Ensure that children make consistently good progress in all classes.
- Improve the curriculum by extending the links between subjects.

A small proportion of those schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of under performance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress during their time in school. Their rate of progress has varied considerably because of past inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school.

Children enter school with a range of skills that overall are below what is usual for their age, particularly in language development. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In the 2007 national assessments, standards were slightly below average, but well below in writing.

Assessments for the current year show an improvement in all aspects, including writing, and standards are broadly average. The improvement is due to good teaching in Year 2, which has helped to address a legacy of underachievement in Year 1.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. In the 2007 national tests in Year 6 standards were broadly average. This was a significant improvement on 2006 when standards were well below average, particularly in mathematics. This improvement was due to good teaching in Year 6 and stronger leadership in mathematics, which clearly identified and addressed areas for improvement. The good progress in Year 6 remedied the slower progress pupils had made in previous years. Assessments for the current Year 6 show that this improvement has been maintained and pupils are on line to exceed their challenging targets.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the small number of pupils whose home language is not English make similar progress to others in their class because of the good level of support they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are polite, considerate of others and behave exceptionally well. Fostered by the school's Christian tradition, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show good attitudes to learning. They are increasingly involved in assessing their own learning and this is helping them to develop independence well. Attendance is satisfactory, but improving steadily. Pupils understand how to live a healthy lifestyle and enjoy the well-balanced meals and healthy snacks on offer. They make good use of breaks to take exercise and willingly take part in sporting activities. They feel very safe in school, secure in the knowledge that they can approach an adult to help them to sort out any problem. Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare and that these are dealt with well. There are planned opportunities in each class for pupils to discuss feelings and share any concerns. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community as monitors and as representatives on the 'Captains' Council'. The council eagerly takes on responsibility for school events and fund raising. Pupils also contribute to a wide variety of community and church events. Sound basic skills and an ability to work together is a satisfactory preparation for their future life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but improving. This is reflected in the satisfactory progress that pupils make overall. However, a significant proportion of teaching seen during the inspection was good. The teaching is stronger in English and mathematics than in other subjects. Where teaching is effective pupils make good progress in lessons and show their enthusiasm for learning. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and there are excellent relationships. The teachers display good subject knowledge and plan activities that are well matched to the range of abilities within the class. The clear learning objectives and the range of activities ensure that pupils learn at a brisk pace. Teachers use questions well to probe and extend pupils' learning. In lessons that are satisfactory the activities are not as well matched to the pupils' abilities and there are missed opportunities to extend learning. This results in pupils making satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported, particularly by effective teaching assistants, and as a result make progress in line with other pupils.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The inclusion of a modern foreign language extends the provision well. The opportunities to link together the work in different subjects to make learning more effective and interesting are not being fully exploited. There are plans to increase the use of theme weeks to enrich the curriculum, and this was recently trialled successfully in a health week. The use of small groups, including ability groups for mathematics, and the provision of additional support ensures that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. There is an emerging initiative with other local schools to develop opportunities for pupils of all backgrounds to work together to develop community cohesion, but it is too early to assess its impact. There is a range of popular extra-curricular activities for pupils to engage in, particularly in music and a number of sports.

In addition, there are opportunities to engage in dance, scrabble and cookery in after school clubs.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school effectively fulfils its mission statement, which states that it is a 'caring school based on Christian values'. The staff know the pupils well and take good care of them. There are good systems for introducing children to school so that they settle quickly. Pupils have a good understanding of the clear rules and the high expectations of staff and this encourages their very good behaviour. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage. They receive good support in class and in small groups so that they make similar progress to other pupils. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are supported well and they make appropriate progress. The school has good links with other professionals and seeks specialist advice when needed. All of the recommended procedures for safeguarding pupils are firmly in place and rigorously applied.

Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are well established and are being used effectively to identify underachievement and to target additional support. Pupils have targets for their work and these are shared with parents. Good marking and the clear targets are effective in helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team has worked hard to bring about significant improvement in the quality of teaching, particularly in core subjects. They have the support of all staff and have successfully regained the confidence of the large majority of parents. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and pupils' work identifies areas for improvement. These are addressed rigorously with the result that pupils' achievement has improved rapidly. The subject leaders for English, mathematics and science are fully involved in monitoring pupils' progress and in planning for improvement. Although overall progress is only satisfactory, there is evidence in classes that an increasing number of pupils are now making good progress and that their previous underachievement is being remedied well. The school has a well established process of self-evaluation that takes account of the views of staff, pupils, parents and governors. The self-evaluation completed for the inspection provided an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development, although some grades were too conservative. The governing body has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The chair of governors is an effective leader and governors now hold the school's senior team to account for its progress. The significant improvements to monitoring, evaluation and planning for improvement have had a good impact upon teaching and pupils' progress. The proven record of rapid improvement over the last year and the strength of the governing body and senior leadership team illustrate that there is good capacity for further improvement. The school currently provides satisfactory value for money.

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**Annex A**

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3

### 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3

### 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

11 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Great Marsden St John's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, BB9 0NX

You will remember that I recently visited your school again to carry out an inspection. It was my fourth visit since the previous inspection identified that the school needed special measures to help it to improve. This will be my last visit as your school has improved so much that it no longer needs the special measures. I would like to thank you for the help you have given me on each visit and for being willing to talk to me about your work and to share your views on the school.

St. John's is now a satisfactory school, but it also has some good points. You develop well as individuals. You behave well and show enthusiasm for your work. You take on responsibilities eagerly and contribute well to the development of the school and the wider community. The school staff look after you well and do their very best to ensure that you are safe and happy. You make as much progress as pupils in most other similar schools and achieve standards that are the same as the average that are found across the country. This is because all of your lessons are satisfactory and many of them are good. You study the correct range of subjects and there are opportunities for you to engage in out of school activities.

The senior leaders of the school and the governors are doing a good job in leading the school and planning for its improvement. We have agreed with them that there are some things that they can do to ensure you make good progress in all of your classes. These are to work together to make certain that all of your lessons are as good as the very best and that you have more opportunities to link together the work that you do in your individual subjects. You can help them by continuing to work hard and by sharing your ideas as to what types of work help you to learn best.

Best wishes for the future.

Garry Jones HMI