

# Pilling St Johns Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119555
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327070
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Heap

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	63
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Eddie Moorat
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Pauline Tate
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Ladies Hill Pilling Preston Lancashire PR3 6HA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 790282

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**Fax number**

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their level of development when they enter Year 1
- the quality of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and how they are used and developed in the full range of subjects, particularly for the highest attaining pupils
- the quality of leadership and management's monitoring and evaluation and whether it leads to effective development planning.

The inspectors collected evidence from school documentation; interviews with pupils, parents, staff and governors; observing lessons and other activities and analysing parents' questionnaires and comments. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This small primary school serves a mainly White British population in an area which has low levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Children enter school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception). The school has successfully achieved a range of awards, including several related to the school's work on the environment.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that it continues to be good and provides good value for money. Parents and pupils are highly supportive and generous in their praise, such as this typical view from a parent, 'This is a school to be truly proud of. The hard work and dedication of the staff is reflected in the enthusiasm the children have for all aspects of school life'.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. This is due to the comprehensive way that the very effective curriculum and caring atmosphere promote personal and social skills. Moral and social development are particularly strong and lead to pupils' excellent behaviour and very good attitudes to school and their work. Pupils clearly and thoroughly enjoy school and their good attendance confirms this. Pupils have excellent knowledge and understanding of the importance of leading healthy and safe lifestyles because the school places great store in providing them with many opportunities to do so. Pupils throughout the school make a good contribution to school life, either through their participation in supportive activities, such as Year 6 pupils helping other pupils during wet playtimes, or through their involvement in the local community. This is well illustrated by pupils being involved in the local church choir.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are typical of children of their age. They make good progress in their learning throughout the school and their overall achievement is good. As a result, standards are above average at the end of Year 6, generally confirmed by the school's recent national test results. Numbers are so small in each year group that it is important to be cautious about using such data because each pupil represents a very high percentage figure. Nevertheless, trends and general points can be identified. For example, at the end of Year 2, an upward trend is evident in reading and writing standards since 2005. Currently, standards are on track to be above average in reading, writing and mathematics even though a third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. It is clear that the sustained improvement in literacy has much to do with the improvements in teaching letters and sounds to help with reading and spelling skills. By the end of Year 6, standards have also been on an upward trend since 2005. National data show that the progress pupils make in Years 3 to 6 has improved significantly to the point where the school has been performing at around the level of the top 25% of schools nationally. Across the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points; most of these pupils are boys. Good academic and personal development means that pupils are well prepared for their future learning and the world of work.

Strengths in teaching and learning include: the strong development of relationships that promote the growth of independence and pupils' confidence to 'have a go'; good classroom management that ensures no disruptions are made to learning and there is equal access to all opportunities on offer and a robust approach to teaching basic skills which means that pupils gain the tools they need to guide their own learning. However, the quality and use of individual targets and marking to challenge and inform pupils is inconsistent and, therefore, at times only promotes satisfactory learning.

The curriculum promotes pupils' academic development well. Each class provides a range of activities that are often stimulating and creative, but the importance of developing good basic skills is always remembered. For example, there is a growing understanding of the importance

of fostering a body of literacy and numeracy skills that are used and developed in work across other subjects. Music is a significant strength of the school that benefits from the skills and interest of specialist staff. The wind band impressively played Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' and the singing in assembly sounded as good as a choir performing. Moreover, the school has rightly gained a strong reputation for developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of environmental issues. The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of activities, including visits and input from visitors. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities particularly benefit from this approach because the curriculum is modified effectively to meet individual needs. Procedures and practices to ensure pupils' safeguarding and protection meet national requirements. The rigorous monitoring of attendance and behaviour play a strong part in these strengths of the school.

Leadership and management are good and self-evaluation is mostly accurate. As a result, the school has improved well since the previous inspection and the capacity to improve further is good. Key staff and governors are particularly strong at fostering personal development and a caring environment, and making the curriculum more effective. Challenging targets are set for improving academic standards and improvement planning identifies the right priorities. However, the criteria for measuring the success of identified initiatives in the school improvement plan are not always challenging enough to give a clear picture of how well priorities are achieved. Community cohesion is promoted well through a vigorous approach to engaging with the village and developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural and religious diversity; for instance, in lessons such as religious education and geography. Governance is satisfactory and governors are highly supportive of the school. However, the governors' current methods of evaluating the school's work draw more on information given by the school than from independent observation and information gathering.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

All children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress from joining Reception with overall levels of development that are in line with those expected for their age. They enter Year 1 with skills and abilities that are a little above average. Children do well in many areas of learning and particularly in personal, social and emotional development, but early writing skills are relatively weaker. Personal development is outstanding, with children showing a great deal of confidence, very good attitudes to work and high levels of social skills. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are good and actively promote the good progress made by children. Staff develop a good rapport with the children and use this well to manage the room and children's learning. A particular strength is the good questioning that extends learning and challenges the children to do well. The wide range of activities benefits from good resources both inside and outside the classroom. Staff provide a good mix of approaches and promote well children's independent learning skills. The school and many parents are proud of the 'family' atmosphere that is deliberately promoted and ensures that the children are very well cared for. Leadership and management are good and actively engaged in ensuring children's welfare and improving learning and provision. A particular strength is the way that individual children's progress is promoted.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality and use of individual targets and marking so that pupils benefit from work that is well matched to their needs and helps them make consistently good progress.

- Improve the challenge and measurability of the success criteria in the school improvement plan.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

**Achievement and standards**

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

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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

## 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Pilling St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Lancashire, PR3 6HA

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to say how much we enjoyed our day inspecting your good school recently. You were all most kind, welcoming, courteous and helpful. These are some of the key findings about your school.

What we really liked about your school:

- the good teaching and the pastoral care shown by the school
- your consistent improvement year on year through the school
- the excellent progress you make in your personal development
- the good links the school has forged with your parents
- the happy atmosphere in the school, the way you support each other and your good contribution to the life of the school
- your excellent behaviour, good attendance and very good attitudes to work that show you thoroughly enjoy school
- your enthusiastic response to the good and interesting range of activities that enrich your curriculum, particularly in the high quality approach to music
- the good leadership and management.

To make your school even better, I have asked your teachers to make sure that your learning targets and their marking are consistent across all classes. This will mean that the work you are asked to do always enables you to make at least good progress. You can be a great help by continuing to always do your very best work. Every year, the school sets out in a plan the things it is going to improve. I have asked leaders and managers to improve the way they measure how well the school is doing in bringing about these improvements. The school council may well be asked to make a contribution to this.

Good luck for the future and best wishes.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector