

Canon Sharples Church of England Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133781
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	328766
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Toft HMI

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	372
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rob McKenzie
Headteacher	Mr Roy Mason
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	Whelley Wigan WN2 1BP
Telephone number	01942 776 188
Fax number	01942 776 119
Email address	enquiries@admin.canonsharples.wigan.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, two assemblies and held discussions with the chair of governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation for management, monitoring, the safeguarding of pupils, teaching, assessment, and the curriculum, together with the inspection questionnaires returned by parents, pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following: the standards of attainment and pupils' personal development; the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and how well assessment is used to improve learning.

Information about the school

This primary school and nursery is above average in size and serves a wide area of mixed housing to the east of Wigan. It is based in new, purpose-built premises. The vast majority of pupils are White British and most speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average although the proportion of those with a statement of special educational needs is above the national figure. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly below average. The school has gained the Activemark and National Healthy School awards.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Canon Sharples is a satisfactory school with some good features. It has improved to a satisfactory degree since the last inspection. This improvement has accelerated in the last year, partly as a result of a restructuring of the senior leadership team. This has led to a more even distribution of responsibilities among the leaders, enabling the headteacher to devote sufficient time to his overall strategic duties. Morale is high among staff and they are keen to help the school to develop further. Given the soundness of the school's current leadership and management, its clear ambition to improve, its accurate self-evaluation, and the recent improvements in management, the curriculum and teaching, it has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Standards are average and, overall, pupils make satisfactory and sometimes good progress throughout the main school and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Writing and speaking are less well developed than other aspects of English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Some pupils, especially the abler ones, do not reach their potential because the teaching is not always as challenging as it should be. Although teaching is evaluated by senior staff, improvement is sometimes slow to follow when weaknesses are identified. The school has done much to develop its assessment and tracking procedures. These are comprehensive but the recording of information is over complex and time consuming. Pupils enjoy school, their attendance is above average and behaviour is good. Parents rate the school highly and are increasingly satisfied with its provision. Pupils receive good levels of care, guidance and support and the school promotes their personal development, health and safety very well. The curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched by a wide range of interesting activities.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Raise attainment in all year groups throughout the curriculum and especially in writing and speaking.
- Bring the satisfactory teaching up to the level of the best by:
 - strengthening the rigour with which it is monitored
 - highlighting good practice
 - providing training to help teachers set pupils the more challenging work needed to raise attainment, and
 - holding teachers to account when they need to improve.

- Improve assessment by:
 - simplifying procedures for recording and analysing tracking, and
 - giving a clearer picture of pupils' progress to staff.

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

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils reach average standards in national tests at ages 7 and 11. This was clearly confirmed by the quality of teaching and pupils' performance in the lessons observed. Given pupils' broadly average attainment when they start school, this represents satisfactory progress. Standards are best in mathematics and science. In English, pupils reach slightly above average standards in reading but their attainment in writing is below average, as are their speaking skills. The school has strengthened its efforts to improve standards in basic skills, especially writing. These have led to improvements in the performance of pupils who require additional learning support and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils are making good progress. However, some pupils who are capable of learning more rapidly do not reach their potential.

Pupils enjoy their learning and are proud of their school and its achievements. Attendance is consistently above the national average. Behaviour is good in all areas of the school, with pupils showing respect and consideration for each other. Disagreements are rare and are quickly sorted out, often by the pupils themselves. Pupils say they feel safe and they have good awareness of issues such as internet and road safety. The award of Healthy School status is a well-deserved recognition of the school's good work in this area. Pupils are keen to take exercise and many enjoy the excellent meals the school provides. There are good opportunities for pupils to serve the school as school councillors or as monitors, and fundraising for the school and a range of charities is well developed. Pupils have opportunities to develop the skills and abilities they will need to do well in the next stages of their education, but given their average standards in English and mathematics, this area is only satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have opportunities to learn about different cultures and faiths, and the school's strong Christian values are at the core of all its work. Pupils benefit from a wide range of visits and visitors, and links with local schools and sporting organisations are strong. A good example of these was seen during the inspection when a coach from the Wigan Warriors rugby club led a highly enjoyable and informative assembly on teamwork.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good and no inadequate teaching seen during the inspection. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils are confident to participate in lessons and ask for the help they need. Praise and reward are used well to encourage and motivate, and there is a genuine feeling of everyone learning together. In the best lessons, a range of stimulating resources such as computers and electronic whiteboards is well used to give extra zest to pupils' learning. Pupils have structured opportunities to discuss issues in pairs and in groups, although many lack the skills to express themselves fluently. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to meet their pupils' needs. In planning lessons, they are particularly successful in providing pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities with work that matches their abilities. Teaching assistants provide skilled and sensitive support that greatly contributes to the good progress of those pupils who require extra help. However, there are not enough opportunities for the school's quicker learners to work independently or at their own pace. Too often they are involved in whole class activities which hold them back and hinder their progress. Professional development for staff has improved their expertise in raising achievement in a number of areas, particularly writing and speaking. These have resulted in some, but not yet enough, improvements in these basic skills.

Pupils' work is thoroughly and conscientiously marked by staff. They are given the advice they need to take the next steps in their learning. Pupils have a good awareness of their targets, particularly in English and mathematics. Progress is aided as a result. The school has improved its arrangements for assessing pupils' work and tracking their progress as they move through the school. However, the procedures for recording are complex and time consuming. They do not provide enough clear and precise evaluation to help staff ensure that progress for all pupils is as good as it could be.

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned. Sufficient time and emphasis are given to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and the school is developing ways to improve writing by using it more effectively in other subjects of the curriculum. The National Curriculum is covered as required and religious education, personal, social and health education, and citizenship are adequately timetabled. Statutory requirements are met. Provision in Reception classes and Years 1 and 2 is being effectively developed to enable pupils to see connections between subjects. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are now taught French and the school is developing its curriculum to consolidate this. The curriculum is effectively organised to provide pupils of different abilities with work which matches their needs. However, this is not always well supported by the challenge posed to abler children by the teaching. The curriculum is well supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities, including good provision for sports within the school and with other schools.

Care arrangements are well organized and make a good contribution to pupils' personal and social development and to their attendance. The school fulfills its' aim to be fully inclusive, welcoming and supporting pupils with different needs and abilities. Support for vulnerable pupils makes a significant contribution to their well-being, behaviour and attendance and enables them to make satisfactory progress in their learning. Good transition arrangements between all key stages and with local high schools enable pupils to move confidently to the next steps in their education. The school welcomes parents and provides a range of information to encourage them to become partners in their child's learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has sound procedures and a staffing structure to enable leaders to manage and oversee its performance effectively. Self-evaluation is carried out conscientiously by staff at different levels in the school. The monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching have improved since the last inspection. However, although much effort is devoted to tracking pupils' progress, recording procedures are complex and take up too much staff time. Also, although teaching is routinely observed, teachers are not yet held fully to account for the ways in which they teach lessons and stretch pupils of differing abilities. Planning for school improvement is satisfactory. Governors play a strong and well informed role in setting the overall direction of the school, supporting the staff, promoting health and safety, liaising with the local community and keeping performance under review. They have an accurate understanding of how well the school and pupils are doing.

The school complies with its statutory duties to promote equal opportunities. It does so with vigour, in line with its values as a church school. Good quality procedures for safeguarding meet all current requirements. Appropriate checks are made on staff and other adults who work in the school. Risk assessments are carried out regularly, ensuring pupils use equipment and apparatus that is safe, clean and in good condition. The school has good working relationships with external support agencies. The 'Nurture Group' is valuable for the most vulnerable pupils who appreciate the quiet, calm atmosphere where they can share their problems and learn to cope.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. Pupils are well taught to respect others and to listen to their points of view. They are made to feel included in the life of the school. They develop a sound understanding of the local community, aided by the school's strong links with the two parishes which it serves. Pupils also develop a sound overall understanding of some different religions and cultures, here and overseas. However, they lack a detailed awareness of the different cultures in those areas nationally which have ethnically diverse populations. The school communicates well with parents about school life and the progress of their children. It has sound procedures for understanding their views about the school. It works effectively with outside organizations, including the local authority, to improve provision.

Good use is made of the spacious and well-resourced new accommodation. Classrooms are well managed and both information and communication technology and lively displays are used effectively to support learning. A good range of staff is deployed efficiently to support learning and administration. The budget is well managed. Given the average standards pupils attain and the good care and guidance they receive, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children start Nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age, but lower in communication, language and literacy. Progress through Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory overall, and it is good in personal and social skills because children are happy and feel secure in the warm, caring atmosphere. At the end of

this stage, standards are as expected for the age range, except that writing lags behind and children lack a broad enough vocabulary, often speaking with single words and not using talk effectively to clarify their thinking. Efforts to overcome this, which include interacting with and encouraging children to talk in all activities and well-focused sessions to learn letters, are only just becoming effective. Behaviour is good. Children learn to share and begin to take responsibility, for example self-registering when they arrive. They move happily between Nursery and Reception rooms during free choice time which prepares them well for the next stage of learning. They know they should care for their health by, for example, eating fruit and drinking water regularly. Welfare provision is good. Staff are good role models and children show care and concern for others. They use equipment safely, showing an increasing sense of responsibility, playing sensibly when they use equipment such as the climbing frame or the bicycles. Teaching is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the learning and development needs of the children and plan an appropriate blend of adult led and free choice activities. However, some free choice activities lack a clear focus where time is not always well spent. Staff plan together, ensuring children experience practical activities that link curriculum areas effectively. Leadership is satisfactory, ensuring staff work as a team, understand the areas which need improvement and use resources effectively to support learning. Robust procedures for assessment, both formal and informal, ensure that staff know where children need extra support. Parents are made welcome and given useful information to help them support their child's learning at home.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are highly satisfied with the provision made by the school and to its 'strong Christian and caring ethos'. A large majority of them consider it to be well managed, the teaching to be effective, and the pupils to be well cared for with most of them enjoying their education. Some would like to see more consistency in the teaching and the ways in which bullying is dealt with, together with better information on how well children are progressing. Inspectors agree that the consistency in teaching needs improving. However, they disagree with the criticisms of the school's procedures for dealing with bullying and giving information to parents, both of which they judge to be sound.

Ofsted invited all the parents and carers of pupils registered at the school to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children. The inspection team received 173 completed questionnaires out of 275 parents/carers.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	106	64	2	1

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. In 2007/08, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007/08, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007/08, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
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. In 2007/08, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

12 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Canon Sharples Church of England Primary School and
Nursery, Wigan, WN2 1BP

Thank you for talking with us during your inspection. I promised to let you know what we thought of your school.

- Canon Sharples is a satisfactory school with some good features.
- It has a strong Christian nature and gives you good care and guidance. You are able to develop well in your time here.
- Your school has improved in recent years. The headteacher, staff and governors intend to make it even better.
- You enjoy your time in school, feel safe and behave well.
- Most lessons are satisfactory and some are good. In the better ones you are given plenty of opportunity to develop your ideas independently.
- You are taught a wide range of subjects and the extra-curricular activities are very interesting.
- You make satisfactory progress throughout the school.
- The school is soundly managed and well organised.
- The new building gives you a wonderful place in which to learn.

To help the school develop further, I have asked the headteacher and governors to:

- help you to improve your work, especially your writing and speaking
- strengthen lessons by helping you to think and work more independently, and
- simplify the way teachers record their assessments of your progress.

I wish you well in your future studies and activities at Canon Sharples School.

Yours sincerely

Peter Toft HMI

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