

Great Marsden St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119436
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339441
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Jean Kendall HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Glenn Tunbridge
Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Fitzpatrick
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and saw all seven teachers who were present during the inspection. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Sixty-eight per cent of inspection time was spent observing teaching and analysing pupils' work in their books. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning, monitoring reports and tracking of pupils' progress. Inspectors also took account of the 87 questionnaire returns from parents and carers, 17 returns from staff and 94 returns from pupils.

- pupils' progress in lessons and the quality of their work, with a particular focus on their progress in Key Stage 1 and by those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the quality of provision and children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the quality of teaching and assessment across the whole school
- the impact of revisions made to the curriculum.

Information about the school

Great Marsden St John's Church of England Primary School is smaller than average and serves the town of Nelson. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion from minority ethnic groups is below average, although a rising number speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased in the last two years and there is now an above average proportion with such needs. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. The school received Healthy Schools status in 2008.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St John's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Aspects of the school's work, such as the care, guidance and support from all staff, the promotion of equal opportunities and the engagement of parents and carers are good. The school provides a happy and harmonious environment where pupils feel safe and grow in confidence. The highly inclusive approach of staff ensures that all pupils are able to participate fully in activities and contribute to the running of the school. This results in good outcomes in aspects of their personal development. All pupils make a good contribution to decision making and have opportunities to take responsibility. Their good behaviour and consideration for one another adds much to the happy and secure atmosphere.

Teaching and the use of assessment are satisfactory overall. Both are good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. This supports pupils in making satisfactory progress across the whole school, although progress is uneven. The most rapid progress is made where activities are very well matched to the learning needs and interests of pupils. In some classes assessment information is not used as effectively to provide challenge for more-able pupils or to plan activities that extend pupils' learning. Children start school with varied knowledge and skills, although they are mostly below the levels typical for children this age. After making good progress in the Reception class all children, whatever their abilities or needs, go on to make satisfactory progress. By the time they leave Year 6 they attain average standards overall. Attendance remains stubbornly low despite the efforts made by the school to improve it. The achievement of those pupils who are absent a lot is adversely affected.

Staff are aware that the teaching and the resultant pupils' progress need to be more consistent. They are working with school leaders to improve practice and are enthusiastically driving improvements in this area. Their enthusiasm is very apparent in the way in which they have embraced changes to the currently satisfactory curriculum. At present, pupils have too few opportunities to apply their skills across the curriculum and have limited artistic, creative and cultural experiences. The development of cross-curricular links and themed approaches have been very well planned to ensure continuity and progression in learning, but they are still at a very early stage.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have shown good leadership and management to stabilise staffing and continue the steady improvement the school is making. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and all staff are aware of where further improvements are needed. They share the ambition to improve the quality of teaching and to raise pupils' achievement. Their collective success is seen in the eradication of inadequate teaching and a steadily growing proportion of good teaching. Governors provide good support and strategic direction. These strengths, with the improving profile

in teaching and strong commitment of staff to embed new initiatives, mean that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement and ensure that pupils make consistent progress by:
 - - sharing the best practice in teaching and assessment and increasing the proportion of good teaching
 - - ensuring that activities fully meet all pupils' needs and extend their learning in all lessons
 - - embedding the changes to the curriculum so that pupils are able to practise and extend their skills across the curriculum and have increased opportunities to develop their artistic and creative skills and to develop cultural awareness.
- Improve attendance so that it is at least average by rigorously tracking pupils' attendance and targeting support for the most persistent absentees and their families.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy learning across a range of subjects. They show good concentration when they are working independently and approach tasks that engage their interest with enthusiasm. Work in their books and observations of their learning in lessons show that they are making satisfactory progress across the whole school. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are below the levels typical of children their age. They make good progress in the Reception class to achieve broadly average levels by the time they start Year 1. Their progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 has been variable in the past, but is now satisfactory because of better teaching and good support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or are underachieving. Pupils make more rapid progress in Years 5 and 6, where teaching is very well matched to their learning needs.

Pupils' consistently good behaviour and positive attitudes help them to make the most of their learning experiences. They are very well behaved in lessons and show consideration for one another around the school. They unanimously told inspectors that they feel safe, that bullying is extremely rare and that they are confident that adults will deal with any concerns they may have. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and of the benefits of healthy eating and exercise. The healthy tuck shop, run by the school council, is popular and very well organised. Pupils make a good contribution to the running of their school by taking positions of responsibility and feel that their contributions are valued. Their involvement in the appointment of new staff and in various fundraising projects also helps them to develop good social and enterprise skills. They have a good awareness of moral issues and fully uphold the

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

school's code of conduct. Their spiritual and cultural development is nurtured well through religious education and worship, and they show tolerance and respect for those from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils' well-developed social and personal skills and their sound basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for high school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Where teaching is most successful, teachers have good subject knowledge and a keen understanding of pupils' learning needs, based on thorough assessment. Pupils are provided with interesting activities that are well matched to their interests and abilities and support the intended learning outcome precisely. In the best lessons pupils of all abilities make good progress because teaching builds on their prior knowledge, extends their skills and provides a good level of challenge. Where teaching is no better than satisfactory, pupils still enjoy lessons but their progress is not as rapid. This is because activities are not well chosen; they occupy pupils rather than extend their learning. Occasionally, teaching slows pupils' progress because the work set is at too low a level. Marking is thorough and often helps pupils to improve their work. However, it is not

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

always sufficiently followed up with the appropriate support and so some pupils make repeated errors. Positive relationships are a strength in all lessons.

The curriculum is suitably balanced and adequately meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special needs and who speak English as an additional language. Staff have recently introduced themes into each year group and developed cross-curricular links between subjects. The initiative has been thoroughly researched and well planned to ensure continuity and progression in learning. This has the potential to increase pupils' opportunities for creative and cultural experiences and enable them to apply and refine their skills in a range of interesting contexts. Pupils are enthusiastic about the changes but it is too soon to demonstrate any impact on their achievement. Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities and visits.

The good care, guidance and support make a strong contribution to pupils' well-being and promote good relationships across the school. Staff take care to develop pupils' self-esteem so that pupils feel listened to and know that their contributions are valued. They say they feel safe in school and are able to talk over any worries they might have. Caring and committed staff give good support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and the more vulnerable pupils. The nurture group and additional support programmes help pupils to develop their skills and confidence. This enables all pupils to be fully included in activities and make good gains in their personal development and social skills. Pupils receive satisfactory and often good guidance to promote their learning, but the good practice is not consistent across the whole school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: 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?

Senior leaders and school governors have a good overview of strengths and weaknesses based on thorough monitoring and accurate self-evaluation. They have set challenging targets for pupils' achievement. All staff have a clear understanding of key priorities and a strong commitment to securing improvement. Core subject leaders (those for English, mathematics and science) make a good contribution to monitoring, tracking pupils' progress and action planning. This is most evident in the collective drive to improve teaching. Senior leaders have stabilised staffing and inadequate teaching has been eradicated. The proportion of good teaching is steadily increasing as initiatives become embedded and teachers develop their skills. Improvements are not fully embedded as

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

there are still inconsistencies in teaching, but achievement is satisfactory across the school and good in some areas. All staff promote equality of opportunity through all aspects of the school's work and there are no significant gaps in achievement between particular groups of pupils.

Governors make a good contribution to strategic planning based on their rigorous monitoring and probing challenge to school leaders. Their monitoring role has been effectively enhanced as a result of termly meetings with subject coordinators to discuss standards and progress. They have ensured that all safeguarding procedures are up to date and meet current requirements. The school's plans to promote community cohesion are based on a sound analysis of its own context. The school community is cohesive and harmonious and there are good links with local schools. However, the school's work has not impacted fully on pupils' cultural development nor pupils' understanding of themselves in a national and global context. The school works satisfactorily with local partners and agencies to ensure the well-being of pupils, particularly the more vulnerable. It has very good relationships with parents and carers, who mostly say they feel well informed and are pleased that their children enjoy school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	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

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below the levels expected for children at this age, especially in early reading, writing and language. They settle quickly, feel safe and grow in confidence in the welcoming and secure learning environment. Children make good progress in all areas of learning because they receive

good teaching and support and have an interesting range of activities that capture their imagination. Good emphasis is given to developing language and early literacy skills. As a consequence, most children enter Year 1 with attainment that is broadly in line with expectations.

There is generally a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning, although occasionally children's activities are overly directed by adults. The classroom is well organised with an appropriate range of resources that children can access for themselves. Children learn and play happily together; they are good at sharing and taking turns and show that they really want to learn. Their learning is enhanced through visits and visitors to the school and through their seasonal walks through the school grounds. Children are enthusiastic about learning outdoors, for example they were engrossed in their role play as road workers and traffic controllers, showing excellent collaboration in their game. However, the outdoor environment is not always used widely enough on a daily basis to promote all areas of learning.

The good provision is underpinned by effective leadership and management. The teacher and teaching assistant work well as a team and know the children well. Assessment is used to good effect to keep track of children's learning and to plan activities that meet their needs and interests. Good links with parents and carers are maintained through regular daily contact and parents and carers are kept well informed. All welfare requirements are in place.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Just under half of parents and carers returned questionnaires. All of those who responded said that their children enjoy school and they are happy with their children's experience. Very few said that they would like more help to support their children's learning and a few commented that they would like more clarity about homework and spelling tests. A very small number also indicated that they feel behaviour could be better managed, but there were no comments relating to this aspect. Inspectors agree with the positive responses of parents and carers and also found St John's to be a happy school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Great Marsden St John's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	60	34	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	59	36	41	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	41	47	44	51	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	44	45	52	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	49	42	48	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	38	49	56	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	44	48	55	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	38	50	57	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	41	48	55	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	33	51	59	4	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	37	53	61	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	47	46	53	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	56	38	44	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 February 2010

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for making inspectors feel so welcome and for your helpful contributions to the inspection. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you and observing your work. We found that your school is providing a satisfactory standard of education and some aspects of its work are good.

These are our main findings.

- Your school is happy and harmonious and you all make a good contribution to it – well done! We were very impressed with the healthy tuck shop run by the school council.
- Attendance is not as high as it should be.
- Your good behaviour and consideration for one another really add to the happy and secure atmosphere.
- You all feel safe and very well cared for. Your teachers provide you with good-quality care, guidance and support.
- Teaching is satisfactory and some of it is good. You enjoy your lessons, particularly when you are challenged and can learn independently. This helps you make satisfactory progress in your learning.
- School leaders and governors are leading improvements in the school well.

There are some aspects of the school's work that we have asked your teachers and school leaders to improve. Here is what we have asked them to do.

- Share best practice in teaching so that more of it is good.
- Give you more opportunities for you to apply your literacy and numeracy skills, and to develop your artistic and creative skills, and your cultural awareness.
- Help you improve your attendance. You can do your part in this by always attending school when you are well.

We wish you every success in the future

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall

Her Majesty's Inspector

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