

Calder Vale St John Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119518
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379825
Inspection dates	24–25 January 2012
Lead inspector	Ann Ashdown

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	29
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stuart Ingleson
Headteacher	Ms H C Huset
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ann Ashdown

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. There were no responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) so the inspector was unable to use these in planning the inspection. The inspector observed three teachers teaching six lessons. In addition, the inspector talked with pupils and listened to them read. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, parents and school staff. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, pupils' progress data, safeguarding information and other documentation. She analysed 12 questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a well-below-average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. One contains children in the Reception Year and pupils in Years 1 and 2; the other pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Almost all pupils are White British. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and those with disabilities is above average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2009. At this time the school entered into a collaboration with a neighbouring small village primary school. The headteacher leads and manages both schools, dividing her time equally between each. Calder Vale St John Church of England Primary School retains its own governing body. At the same time as this inspection the Church of England Diocese of Blackburn carried out an inspection of the religious character of the school. This report is available separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall Effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Since the last inspection pupils' progress has accelerated and teaching and learning have improved. A very successful collaborative arrangement with a neighbouring school has helped to secure the leadership of a talented and experienced headteacher, enriched the curriculum, given pupils greater opportunities to develop their personal and social skills and allowed staff to share their expertise.
- Children in the Reception Year settle quickly into the school and make good progress from their individual starting points. This good progress continues as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. Although standards in national tests and assessments vary widely from year to year, typically pupils reach at least average attainment when they leave Year 6.
- All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have disabilities, achieve well because they are well taught and well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. In this very inclusive school staff know their pupils well and work is usually closely matched to their needs. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is slower when the lesson objective is not absolutely clear and pupils' targets are not specific enough.
- Pupils behave well in school and their attendance is high. The vast majority of parents and carers say how safe their children feel in school and how much they enjoy learning.
- Members of the governing body, the headteacher and all staff have a shared and firm focus on improving the school further. School self-evaluation is accurate. For example, staff have rightly identified that some boys are making slower progress in writing and, although they recognise there is more to be done, have already put in place some successful strategies to remedy this relative weakness.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' progress, particularly that of boys in writing, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length across all areas of the curriculum
 - using relevant and exciting experiences as a stimulus for writing.
- Improve further the quality of already good teaching and learning by:
 - always setting clear lesson objectives in simple language so all pupils are sure about what they are trying to achieve
 - setting pupils more specific learning targets, reviewing them regularly and revising them when they have been achieved.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils, rightly, feel that they are making good progress. In lessons, pupils were seen to have good attitudes to learning. They concentrate on the task in hand and answer questions readily. Consequently, they make good progress and achieve well. In a particularly good series of English lessons pupils in Key Stage 2 successfully developed and redrafted their writing and clearly understood how to use, for example, adverbs 'to make writing flow'. Pupils make good progress in their reading because they receive good-quality teaching of phonics (the linking of letters and sounds) and regular guided reading sessions. Although levels of attainment in reading vary widely it is typically below average at the end of Year 1 and average by Year 6. Pupils' good progress in reading was confirmed when the inspector listened to pupils of differing ages read aloud. Most parents are very happy with the progress their children are making. A very small minority feel that progress slows in Key Stage 2. The inspector investigated this concern but found that work in pupils' books, that on classroom walls and the school's own tracking data all confirmed the good progress pupils were seen making in lessons. Tracking indicates that the progress of some boys in writing is slower than that in other areas of their learning but the school is beginning to remedy this weakness through the successful teaching of the 'boys writing group'. However, opportunities for pupils to write at length across all areas of the curriculum about subjects that they find exciting and relevant are presently underdeveloped.

Children enter the Reception Year with skills which are below those typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. They settle quickly into school routines and benefit from the good role models provided by older pupils. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with skills which are much closer to those expected for their age. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and attainment is typically average when they leave Year 6. In national tests standards fluctuate very widely from year to year depending on the differing abilities of the very small cohorts. Pupils with special needs and those with disabilities make the same good progress as their peers

because they receive perceptive, timely and sharply focused help from both teachers and teaching assistants.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good across the school. A good balance of teacher- and child-led activities and a bright and stimulating learning environment ensure that children in Reception and those in Years 1 and 2 feel safe and develop the skills to learn independently. Teachers use a variety of interesting resources and activities to engage pupils in learning. Younger pupils, who had recently visited a dinosaur museum, spoke knowledgeably about the characteristics of different dinosaurs. They particularly enjoyed learning when checking to see if the 'eggs' underneath their own 'dinosaur' had hatched yet. Teachers have a good knowledge of individual pupils' needs and ensure that work is well matched to these. However, in some lessons the learning objective is not absolutely clear so pupils are not always sure exactly what they are trying to achieve. Most lessons are briskly paced and challenging. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills through structured use of computers. The vast majority of parents and carers confirmed inspection evidence that teaching and learning are good. Teachers mark pupils' work consistently and give them useful feedback to help them improve. However, the targets they are given are not always sufficiently specific and are not reviewed and revised sufficiently regularly to maximise pupils' progress.

Teachers use the well-planned curriculum to meet pupils' needs, extend their knowledge and understanding and to successfully promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils receive high-quality and imaginative music teaching which extends their creative skills and builds their self-confidence through individual and group performance.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is typically good. They are kind and respectful to each other and to staff and visitors. Older pupils, in mixed-age classes, provide good role models for younger children. They work together well in pairs and groups and all pupils enjoy being part of whole-school activities such as musical and dramatic productions. Pupils understand the school's behaviour code and are very clear about rewards and sanctions. Staff manage any incidents of challenging behaviour very well. Pupils say how safe they feel in school and know that they can talk with an adult if they have any problems. Parents and carers share their children's confidence that the school keeps pupils safe. They also agree with the inspection findings that behaviour is typically good. Pupils are very clear about how to keep themselves safe. They understand that there are different types of bullying and are particularly well informed about cyber-bullying and internet safety. They feel that their views are listened to and are proud to be members of the school council. The fact that pupils enjoy coming to school is reflected in their high attendance and excellent punctuality.

Leadership and management

Members of the governing body and the headteacher evaluate the school's work effectively and have identified appropriate priorities for development. The governing body are very supportive of the school and are involved in determining its strategic direction. Staff are appreciative of the opportunities they have for professional development, by sharing expertise and developing their leadership and management roles through collaboration with their partner school. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and give no cause for concern. All pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed and any gaps in achievement between groups of pupils, such as that of boys in writing, are beginning to narrow. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The school communicates regularly with parents and carers through termly reports, newsletters and its very informative website in addition to personal and telephone conversations. However, a very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about homework and teaching methods used at Key Stage 2 and the school recognises that, although communication with parents and carers is good, even more needs to be done to ensure parents are kept fully informed about new developments in these areas.

The curriculum is good and meets pupils' needs well. However, the school is not complacent and the curriculum is currently being reviewed and developed to provide more exciting opportunities for writing based on greater use of the outdoor environment. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, both in lessons, through worship and assemblies and through a range of exciting trips, visits and visitors to the school. Pupils speak very enthusiastically about activities as varied as their visit to the Isle of Man where they enjoyed a range of challenging outdoor activities and a 'beauty and the universe day' where they made rockets and gazed at the stars.

Calder Vale St John school has improved markedly since the last inspection and, on the basis of this good track record and its good leadership and management, has good capacity to improve further.

Glossary

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.
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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 January 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Calder Vale St John Church of England Primary School,
Preston PR3 1SR**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school this week. I especially enjoyed listening to you perform your group poem. A particular thank you goes to those of you who read aloud to me, filled in the questionnaires and were keen to tell me so much about your school. Please thank your parents and carers who also filled in the questionnaires.

This is what I have said about your school in our report.

- Your behaviour is good and you show kindness and consideration to others.
- Yours is a good school which continues to improve.
- Your achievement is good because you make good progress and attain average standards.
- The teaching you receive is good.
- The way your school is led and managed and the curriculum you follow are good.

This is what I have asked your school to do to help it improve.

- Help you make even faster progress, especially the boys in writing, by giving you more opportunities to write about subjects that really excite and interest you.
- Make your lessons even better by:
 - making sure you clearly understand the lesson objective
 - setting you really clear learning targets and regularly giving you new ones when you achieve them.

All of you can help your school become even better by working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Ann Ashdown
Lead Inspector

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