

# St Stephens's Church of England Primary School Blackburn

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119439
<b>Local Authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	358553
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Suzi Clipson-Boyles

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	485
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	CLlr Pat McFall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Eileen Don
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Robinson Street Blackburn Lancashire BB1 5PE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 277350
<b>Fax number</b>	01254 277359
<b>Email address</b>	st.stephens.primary@blackburn.gov.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 15 lessons and observed 16 teachers. They also made five short additional visits to lessons across the three key stages. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body, school staff, and the School Improvement Partner from the local authority. Inspectors looked at a range of other evidence including pupils' books, school assessment and tracking data, planning, policies, the minutes from meetings and school improvement documents. Parents and carers submitted 211 questionnaires that were analysed by the team. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires from the pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the accuracy and effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation and development planning processes in driving improvement
- how well the school identifies and helps pupils who need to make accelerated progress
- how effectively the school is working with parents and carers to improve pupils' attendance.

## Information about the school

The school is much larger than the average primary school. It changed its status from a junior school to a primary school in September 2009. The adjacent infant school closed and its pupils transferred to the re-designated school. Following its re-designation, the school unexpectedly had to continue operating on two sites due to problems and indefinite delays with the new buildings. Staff and pupils moved to the new site in March 2010. The school is attended mainly by pupils of Asian heritage. The majority of pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language when they start school. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities including pupils with statements of special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than that found nationally.

**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: how good is the school?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is extremely low. While learning and progress are satisfactory, this is not sufficient to help pupils gain enough ground from their low starting points. As a consequence, they are ill-equipped for the next stages of their education and future economic well-being. The school is failing in its duty to promote equal opportunities because a significant number of pupils are not achieving their full potential. There are some very early signs that learning is starting to improve. However, the pace of change is too slow, and many pupils do not attain the standards of which they are capable. Leaders have started to improve the quality of teaching and monitor pupils' progress more closely. However, the effectiveness and capacity of the leaders in driving and securing the necessary improvement quickly are inadequate. Leaders' evaluations of the school's performance, particularly its effectiveness in enabling pupils to achieve academically, are inaccurate. Hence the focus on raising attainment has not been an urgent enough priority until very recently and the pace of change for pupils has been too slow. Improvements remain fragile and attainment continues to be low. The governing body provides insufficient support and challenge and its effectiveness is inadequate

Despite these significant shortcomings, the staff are extremely committed to providing a welcoming and safe environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school and engage well with the learning opportunities provided. Their behaviour is good and they make very positive contributions to the school and local communities. Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe are also good.

Pupils are well cared for and receive good quality support. This helps them to develop good personal skills and a strong sense of well-being. However, too many pupils are not making the accelerated progress which is needed if they are to reach the expected level for their age. This is because teaching is mostly satisfactory, rather than good.

More-able pupils, in particular, are underachieving throughout the school because their learning goals do not provide sufficient challenge.

Much good work has been implemented to develop a more creative approach to the curriculum. This has been successful in engaging pupils' interests but the curriculum has not yet had a significant impact on improving basic skills. Art and science are stronger subjects across the school because of the practical approach to teaching and learning in these subjects.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress by:
  - - ensuring that all teachers use assessment effectively to plan learning for pupils of all ability levels in Key Stage 2
  - - providing higher levels of challenge for more-able pupils throughout the school
  - - ensuring opportunities for pupils to contribute to their learning by developing their speaking and listening skills
  - - maximising the effectiveness of teaching assistants by extending current good practice more widely.
- Ensure leaders drive school improvement with a greater sense of urgency by:
  - - using more accurate benchmarks for measuring pupils' outcomes in order to evaluate the school's performance
  - - identifying sharp and measurable success criteria for school development within tighter timescales
  - - providing training for members of the governing body so that their responsibilities can be fully and effectively implemented.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>4</b>
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The majority of pupils start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below those expected for their age. In Key Stage 1, most pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. However, learning and progress in these subjects are less consistent across Key Stage 2. This slows down the pace with which pupils are able to catch up to the levels expected by the time they leave school. Consequently, attainment in English and mathematics has remained low for the last three years and, hence, achievement is inadequate.

Progress made by different groups of pupils is variable. Although pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, many of the more-able pupils in all key stages are underachieving. The progress of pupils speaking English as an additional language varies according to the quality of teaching, but overall is satisfactory. Inspectors observed extremely diligent and enthusiastic pupils across the school. Positive attitudes to learning and an eagerness to learn were evident in most classrooms. Attendance has improved and is now average. Pupils respond well to the school's creative curriculum and they are able to talk knowledgeably about healthy lifestyles and issues of safety. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although their understanding of communities other than their own is less well developed.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

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

## How effective is the provision?

While teaching is satisfactory overall, it is not good enough to make up the shortfall in learning pupils have accrued over time; consequently, pupils are not able to achieve satisfactorily. There are some stronger qualities of teaching common to all classrooms, for example: good, supportive relationships between pupils and adults; clear classroom routines and behaviour management; good subject knowledge; and stimulating well-organised classroom environments. In some classes, teaching is particularly good because it enables pupils to make more rapid progress leading to much-needed gains in their learning. Such teaching is characterised by effective use of assessment information to plan where the learning of pupils at all levels of ability needs to move forward each day. However, the majority of teaching is only satisfactory because the planning is not as finely-tuned in this way. This means that, in too many classes, pupils do not make the accelerated progress needed to help them catch up by the end of Key Stage 2. In some lessons, too much time is spent by the whole class sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher talk. This does not move learning forward for most pupils. Usually, the level of teaching is directed at the middle level of ability so it is too difficult for some pupils and not challenging enough for others. In many classes, teaching assistants make a significant contribution to learning when working with small groups. However, this is not always the case. There are too few opportunities for pupils to work practically and interact with one another; for example, through discussing ideas, decision making and evaluating their own work. Much has been done to adopt a more creative approach to the curriculum and this

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is working well, though it is still in the early stages of development. The curriculum is enriched well to stimulate interest and promote enjoyment. During the inspection, pupils were thoroughly enjoying the theatre workshops provided by a local theatre. Care, guidance and support are good so pupils are happy at school and enjoy their learning. A significant number of pupils are helped to learn how to improve their behaviour and develop more positive relationships. Pupils, whose circumstances have made them more vulnerable, are helped well according to their individual needs. The school has worked effectively with parents, carers and pupils to improve attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers are not driving and securing improvement sufficiently. Positive steps have been taken by school leaders to unite two very different school communities and establish the new school. Pupils and staff have settled happily into their new buildings. Links with communities beyond the school are less well developed but the school's duty to promote community cohesion is satisfactory overall. However, too little has been done to raise attainment and achievement. During the period of change, leaders' evaluation of the school's performance has been inaccurate, especially in relation to the pupils' attainment, learning and progress. There has been insufficient focus on improving the quality of teaching that pupils receive and accelerating the progress they make. The school's development plan focuses too much on provision rather than the priorities to improve outcomes for pupils.

During the current academic year, leaders have started to focus on improving pupils' progress. However, while senior leaders are starting to communicate their ambition to staff to raise attainment and middle leaders are becoming more involved in leading the school, it is too early for the impact of these actions to be felt. Targets are set for pupils' progress, but these are not sufficiently challenging. Systems for monitoring and managing the quality of teaching are in place, but are not being consistently applied. The extent to which the school promotes equal opportunities is inadequate because a significant number of pupils are underachieving. However, the school works effectively to prevent racial discrimination, and different ethnic groups work well together across the school.

The effectiveness of the governing body is inadequate because members have a lack of understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They do not hold senior leaders to account, and have had insufficient impact on raising attainment. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are satisfactory, but governors are not sufficiently aware or well informed of the part they have to play in this.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children generally make satisfactory progress in their learning, and they enjoy their time in Reception. In some areas children make good progress. For example, their physical development and personal and social skills develop particularly well as a result of the good provision outdoors. During the afternoon creative sessions, children enjoy choosing from a range of exciting learning opportunities and this helps them to develop skills of independent learning. Creative development is improving rapidly as a result of this flexible curriculum. However, during morning sessions progress in language and mathematical skills is satisfactory rather than good because there are not enough opportunities for more focused learning in smaller groups. Some adults spend too long talking to the children in larger groups at the same level. This means that children do not have enough opportunities to develop their own speaking skills and sometimes they become restless. This particularly slows down the progress of children who are in the early stages of learning to speak English. The indoor and outdoor learning areas provide secure and stimulating environments for learning. Vibrant displays celebrate children's work well, and resources are well organised and accessible to children. Children respond extremely well to this approach. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The day-to-day coordination of the team is effective, and staff communicate well with each other in order to adapt planning according to the events of the day. Assessments of children's progress are thorough and inform ongoing planning. Strategic planning is less well developed because targets for success are not defined sharply or measured from systematic evaluations of outcomes. Most of the welfare requirements are met, but governors and staff do not audit these regularly enough in order to identify necessary actions. Parents

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and carers enjoy good relationships with staff and appreciate the good quality induction, on-going information, and special workshops that the school provides.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

The number of questionnaires returned represented a majority of families within the school. Most parents and carers are happy with the school because their children are well cared for, safe and they enjoy learning. These views are similar to the findings of the inspection. Some parents and carers feel that they are not always listened to and their views are not valued, particularly by members of the governing body. Inspection evidence indicates that there are not sufficient opportunities for parents and carers to engage constructively with the governing body. While school staff are very welcoming to, and supportive of, parents and carers, there is evidence that the governing body does not always engage sufficiently well with parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Stephens's Church of England Primary School Blackburn 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 214 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 485 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	128	60	78	36	4	2	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	118	55	86	40	5	2	3	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	90	42	106	50	10	5	7	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	97	45	102	48	10	5	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	103	48	101	47	4	2	3	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	90	42	95	44	14	7	6	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	86	40	109	51	7	3	6	3
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)	81	38	106	50	9	4	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	81	38	113	53	11	5	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	81	38	110	51	9	4	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	66	31	110	51	21	10	6	3
The school is led and managed effectively	94	44	98	46	9	4	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	100	47	101	47	3	1	5	2

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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



1 December 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Stephens's Church of England Primary School Blackburn, BB1 5PE**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were impressed with your helpful and kind behaviour. It was good to see you enjoying learning so much in your new school buildings. You told us that you feel happy, safe and secure. We agree that the adults take good care of you, support you well, and keep you safe.

There are some important things that the school needs to improve and we have judged that it requires 'special measures'. This means it will get extra help and inspectors will visit regularly to make sure that the school is improving quickly enough. We are concerned that some of you are not making fast enough progress, especially in Key Stage 2. We have asked that the school works to:

- provide help for pupils in all classes to make faster progress so that by the end of Year 6 your attainment is at least average
- make regular checks to ensure that the school is improving, involving all leaders and governors.

Despite the important things that need improving, some aspects of your school are good. You know a lot about healthy lifestyles and understand well how to stay safe. You work sensibly together in pairs and groups, and take on lots of responsibilities around the school. You have very positive attitudes to learning and your attendance is much improved. I hope you will all continue to work hard in this way and that you and your teachers will work together to improve your school.

Yours sincerely

Dr Suzi Clipson-Boyles

Lead inspector

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