

St Barnabas and St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119499
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	379818
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Pye

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	287
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Prowse
Headteacher	Carla Martini
Date of previous school inspection	08 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons or part-lessons, taught by 11 teachers. They held meetings with pupils, teachers and support staff, parents, members of the governing body and also the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work, and looked at school development planning, progress monitoring documentation, the school's learning platform and also pupils' workbooks. Inspectors also analysed 144 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 34 completed by staff and 97 returned by pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school has worked to raise attainment, particularly in English and mathematics.
- How well assessment is used to support learning throughout the school.
- How successfully the curriculum meets the needs of all the pupils in the school.
- How well provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage impacts on children's learning.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. There are high numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and a high proportion of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with that seen usually. The school has Healthy School status. There have been some significant changes in staffing since the previous inspection, including the establishment of a new senior leadership team.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Barnabas and St Paul's is a good school. It provides a stimulating and friendly setting. The quality of care, guidance and support pupils receive, often on an individual basis from teachers and teaching assistants, is outstanding and underpins the ethos of the school. This is supported by extremely effective partnerships with outside agencies and institutions. Behaviour is excellent. The headteacher has been the driving force behind the good improvement made since the last inspection. She has overseen a range of initiatives that have improved provision rapidly and accelerated achievement in all Key Stages. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of what the school is doing to raise their children's confidence, self-esteem and academic performance. A typical comment is 'A very improved school, with many facilities for pupils to learn and progress.' The school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding.

Children's skills on entry to the Reception Year are usually below age-related expectations. The good provision allows them to make good progress and they continue to do so throughout the school. As a result, attainment has risen to broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Pupils feel safe and have a wide variety of responsibilities in school, as school councillors, eco-warriors and play-leaders, for example. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. Opportunities to enjoy singing and celebrate their achievements make a significant contribution to their excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Attendance is average because, although pupils enjoy coming to school, too much time is taken off for extended holidays by a small minority of families. Teaching is mostly good, with warm relationships between pupils and adults. Assessment is used well, but, in a small minority of lessons, teaching is satisfactory because teachers do not match activities closely enough to pupils' abilities, or the pace of lessons is too slow to accelerate pupils' learning. The newly introduced creative curriculum is already enriching the experiences of the pupils and has been received well by them.

Procedures to monitor and evaluate the work of the school are rigorous and, as a result, leaders, staff and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. St Barnabas and St. Paul's is a school where performance is always under review to seek ways to improve. That has resulted in

good improvement in provision and outcomes since the last inspection. The school has, therefore, a good capacity to sustain improvement and provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment further by:
 - sharing good and exemplary practice in teaching, already evident in most classrooms, in relation to matching work to pupils' abilities
 - ensuring that the pace of all lessons is brisk enough to move pupils on more quickly with their learning.

- Improve attendance by seeking further ways of working with the small minority of parents and carers whose children miss school through taking extended holidays, so as to encourage them to support their children's education through regular attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are enthusiastic learners and, at the start of lessons, are keen to begin their activities. For example, having learnt about animal adaptations in different climatic zones, Year 2 pupils could not wait to 'invent' their own animals. The pupils get on with each other extremely well in lessons, enjoy the activities and are delighted when their classmates succeed and are rewarded. Following a slight decline in national test results in 2009, inspection evidence including the 2011 test results, demonstrates the school has improved significantly and that attainment is now consistently broadly average by the end of Year 6. Progress across school is, therefore, good and pupils of all groups are achieving well from their starting points. As a result of targeted support from a well-trained team of teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as that of their peers. In addition, pupils new to learning English are progressing well in their understanding and use of the new language.

Pupils' exemplary behaviour reflects the effective partnership and trust between home and school. The pupils feel safe and comment 'The teachers keep us safe and are always there to help us.' Their contribution to the wider community is outstanding. They take part in many activities within the city, such as 'Big Sing' and 'Little Sing'. Older pupils look after younger ones on a regular basis and pupils in all classes take their fundraising very seriously indeed. Pupils talk accurately and confidently about how to lead a healthy lifestyle, but this knowledge is not always followed up by appropriate actions. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly developed. Pupils reflect deeply and thoughtfully on their feelings and follow a clear system of religious and moral values, which they apply to their daily lives. The school has a strict attendance policy and endeavours to keep attendance to average levels, yet despite the school's continued and strenuous efforts, a small number of families take extended leave during term time. With average attainment, pupils are satisfactorily placed for their future well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is mostly good and there are examples of outstanding practice across the school. Relationships between pupils and adults and between pupils themselves are a strong feature and there is a shared commitment to learning. Pupils are given many opportunities to work collaboratively and to act as a learning resource for each other. For example, in a Year 5 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson, pupils worked collaboratively to input data. Marking and verbal feedback are used well to guide pupils to the next steps in their learning. Targets are used effectively overall to set challenges. However, in some lessons teachers' planning and the management of time in lessons did not take into consideration the wide-ranging abilities of the pupils and their readiness to learn. In others, opportunities to move learning on were missed. Bespoke support from teaching assistants enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to develop skills to help them access everything lessons have to offer.

The new creative curriculum is already supporting the raising of attainment by allowing the pupils to apply their skills in literacy and numeracy in a wide range of contexts. Teachers' planning now includes a good balance between promoting pupils' interests and ensuring that they acquire the skills necessary for success in all their subjects.

The well-being of each and every pupil is at the heart of everything the school tries to do and staff show the utmost commitment to caring for each individual. Targeted support for potentially vulnerable pupils plays an important role in fostering their learning and development. Excellent links with outside agencies ensure extra assistance is available for individual pupils, if required. The school provides an exceptionally welcoming environment for pupils, parents and carers. Induction procedures are of high quality, enabling children entering the Reception class to settle down quickly to their new surroundings.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders inspire staff and morale is high. There is a clear, shared commitment to drive up attainment and improve the school further. Leaders have detailed information about individual pupils and regularly check the pupils' performance and their contribution to school life. The management of 'quality teaching first' has enabled marked improvements in attainment and progress throughout the school since the previous inspection. Staff are grateful for the support they receive and comment 'The school has clear direction and we all have high expectations for ourselves and the children.' The governing body is supportive of the school and is effective in carrying out its responsibilities. It is active in evaluating the school's performance and influencing its development.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding because the school has been successful in building excellent working relationships in order to foster pupil well-being and learning. As one parent commented, 'Teachers are friendly and will sort out problems straight away.' An impressive and effective range of partnerships has a positive impact on pupils' learning and emotional health. The school promotes equal opportunities by checking rigorously each pupil's progress and tackles discrimination well. Thorough safeguarding arrangements ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff. The training of staff in safeguarding, particularly child protection, is of good quality. The school provides a cohesive community and pupils have many opportunities to engage with children from other schools in contrasting national locations, including in rural settings.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

This is a good Early Years Foundation Stage setting. Children enter the Reception class with skills levels that are generally below expectations for their age. As a result of effective induction procedures and extensive family involvement and engagement in their children's learning, they make good progress. The nurturing and positive environment ensures that children develop as secure and independent learners. They are confident and enjoy role-play, when organising jobs in the 'house' or wearing hard hats for 'construction', for example. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities, enabling children to show that they can behave well, use equipment and share space safely and understand how to share and take turns fairly. That was evident when counting teddies out of a bag in a group activity.

The setting is led and managed well by a relatively new team. The Early Years Foundation Stage team leader has a clear vision and has brought about a purposeful approach quickly. She is supported by a committed team, including well-informed teaching assistants. Observation procedures are effective and used in daily practice to ensure teachers have an accurate understanding of performance in all areas of the setting, including children's progress. Staff are very aware at all times of the welfare of the children in their charge and there are very clear procedures to promote children's safety.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers expressed the view that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. In addition, a very large majority is entirely happy with their children's experiences at the school. As some parents and carers commented, 'I am very happy with the way the school is run.' A very small minority is of the opinion that the school does not do enough to help guide parents and carers with learning at home. Inspectors considered that aspect, but found that school makes much effort to offer support and guide parents and carers with their child's learning. Some parents and carers felt that their children were not making enough progress. The inspection examined school data and found that children are making good progress. A small proportion of parents and carers was concerned that the school did not provide them with enough information about their children's progress. Inspectors looked at the methods used by the school and found that the school provides regular information for parents and carers about children's progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Barnabas and St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 287 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	49	71	49	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	61	53	37	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	68	47	66	46	8	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	42	72	50	7	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	62	43	73	51	5	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	39	73	51	12	8	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	41	76	53	7	5	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)	53	37	79	55	4	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	38	76	53	9	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	47	69	48	5	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	37	78	54	6	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	61	42	74	51	5	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	52	61	42	6	4	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



19 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Barnabas and St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Blackburn, BB2 1SN

Thank you all for your warm welcome when the inspection team visited your school recently. You were very polite and kind to us. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to some of us on Thursday lunchtime. We enjoyed your excellent behaviour and the way you supported each other confidently in class.

St Barnabas and St Paul's is a good school. You are right to be proud of it. You are making good progress in your lessons and most of you enjoy learning. By the time you leave school at the end of Year 6, the standards that you reach are broadly average. The adults who work with you care for and look after you extremely well. You look after younger children very well, too, and accept such a wide range of responsibilities to help run the school. You are not afraid to give visitors advice on how to keep safe!

Your headteacher and all the other staff are very proud of you and they are always looking for ways to make the school even better. We would like to help them with this, so we have asked your teachers to help you make even faster progress, by making sure that at all times your work matches your abilities. We have asked the teachers to make sure that lessons always move along at a lively pace so that you can learn more quickly. We have also asked your school to find ways to help a small minority of you attend more regularly.

Thank you again for your kindness to us. Please keep working hard and looking after each other.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pye
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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