

Baxenden St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 119440 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 379800 |
| Inspection dates | 30 April 2012–1 May 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Marie Cordey |

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

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| 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 | 192 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | David Brown |
| Headteacher | Christina Regan |
| Date of previous school inspection | 30 March 2009 |
| School address | Church Avenue Baxenden Accrington BB5 2RQ |
| Telephone number | 01254 234074 |
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|---------------------------|------------------------------|
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Introduction

Inspection team

Marie Cordey
Robert Birtwell

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed eight teachers and visited nine lessons, five of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made other more brief visits to lessons and also heard pupils reading. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation evidence, school improvement plans, safeguarding documentation, and records of internal and external monitoring of the school. The inspectors also analysed questionnaires completed by 71 parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St John's is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is low. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The headteacher took up post in September 2011. A deputy headteacher has been appointed recently and takes up post in September 2012.

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 | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 3 |
| Leadership and management | 3 |

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. It is rapidly improving because of the clear and unequivocal drive for improvement of the headteacher that is followed by most staff. It is not yet good because attainment in writing requires improvement and not enough teaching is good. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress in their learning although their emerging writing is not as assured as their counting skills. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly average; pupils perform better in mathematics than they do in English. By the end of Year 6 pupils make satisfactory progress and their attainment is broadly average although it is above average in mathematics. Attainment in English is weaker; it is average in reading and below average in writing.
- Good teaching in some classes in Key Stage 2 challenges pupils to achieve their best in an atmosphere of high expectations. This is not consistent and the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall including in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils are welcoming and polite and their behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Pupils and their parents and carers say that behaviour has improved and that they feel safe in school. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance has improved to above average.
- Most staff, pupils and their parents and carers comment that the school is improving because of the actions of leaders, managers and the governing body. Leaders have managed performance to tackle weaknesses in teaching and have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance. Mostly staff rigorously follow school systems and adopt the clear vision for improvement set by the headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English, especially in writing, by:
 - focusing more on improving and embedding pupils' basic skills in spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that the majority is good and better by May 2013 through:
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' performance
 - providing more challenge in lessons, especially for more-able pupils
 - ensuring that assessment is accurate and reliable and that pupils are aware of how they are doing in their work as well as precisely what to do to improve it further.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by May 2013 by:
 - focusing more on improving the quality of children's emerging writing
 - ensuring that children become more confident and independent by structuring day-to-day routines, indoors and outdoors, that are clearly understood by children.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management across the school by September 2012 by:
 - ensuring that all staff rigorously follow school systems and adopt the clear vision for improvement set by the headteacher.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Reception class with overall skills that are in line with their age. An increasing focus on children's ability to link letters and sounds is beginning to improve their emerging writing but they are not consistently challenged to achieve more. Children's writing is not as assured as their counting, reading and speaking. Children are very eager to speak to visitors. Their outcomes by the end of their time in the Reception class are in line with their age, representing satisfactory progress.

Parents and carers believe that their children achieve well. Inspectors judge that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils thrive when they are challenged to work hard in an atmosphere of achievement. In a mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2, for instance, pupils eagerly competed to 'beat the clock' in a series of challenging activities to add, multiply and divide numbers up to 10. Positive attitudes to learning are reflected in the mutual respect between staff and pupils. When expectations of pupils' performance are lower, their progress slows. Pupils wrote sentences in an English lesson in Key Stage 2, for example, and were praised even when those sentences did not quite make sense. Opportunities were missed to explain precisely how to develop from writing simple to more complex sentences. Attainment in writing is lower than that in reading and mathematics. Pupils' spelling, punctuation, grammar and sentence construction are not embedded early enough to enable pupils to successfully raise their attainment in later years. New systems to engage pupils in

reading are supporting pupils' average attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Attainment in mathematics is a strength. Pupils have a good knowledge of mental mathematics which provides a strong foundation for applying this knowledge to sophisticated problem-solving activities. Systems to track pupils' performance and set challenging targets have been hampered by inconsistencies in the reliability and accuracy of assessment information. Robust systems are now in place to effectively target improvement and these are followed by most staff. The very few numbers of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified and thoughtfully supported by teaching and support staff, so they make progress equal to others in the school.

Quality of teaching

Typically, teaching is satisfactory overall. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy the variety of activities available for them to play and learn. They relish role-playing as gardeners and doctors, for example. Resources are limited, particularly outdoors, and this restricts their opportunities to extend their physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's parents and carers consider that behaviour and learning are positive. Inspectors found that children settle down quickly and that their learning is satisfactory. Most children participate happily and enthusiastically in a range of practical activities. When their horizons are expanded and they are encouraged to be independent, children blossom. They thrived, for example, when they went on a 'bug hunt' in the school field and eagerly shared their discoveries with each other, their staff and inspectors. Day-to-day routines are not fully established and this causes some uncertainty for children who are not always confident in exploring their environment or when relating to others.

Most parents and carers believe that their children are learning well. Inspectors judge that pupils' learning is satisfactory. Pupils learn well, however, in lessons where they are clearly directed to work which is matched to their interests and abilities. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils rehearsed the effectiveness of spoken sentences and went on to write increasingly complex, effective sentences. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well developed in these lessons because they learn to appreciate literature and the arts as well as recognise other people's points of view. Overall, satisfactory teaching ensures that pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning, but misses the opportunity to challenge and extend pupils' progress. Occasionally, teachers speak for too long and pupils become less focused. At times, this means that they are not sure what is being asked of them and so their work rate slows. Inconsistent levels of challenge reflect some low expectations of pupils' abilities, especially for more-able pupils. Marking is generally up to date but it is not clear to pupils exactly what their attainment is or what, precisely, they need to do in order to improve their work.

Teaching assistants are suitably deployed to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Occasionally, they are underutilised, for instance when supporting just one pupil while the teacher is introducing the lesson. They are used to better effect when they are teaching small groups on a specific topic clearly related to their specific abilities.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are confident that any rare incidents of bullying of any kind will be dealt with effectively and consider that behaviour has improved. Their parents and carers believe that they enjoy school life and pupils' above average

attendance demonstrates this. A small number of parents had concerns about behaviour and inspectors found that interruptions to learning were rare and effectively managed. Pupils are very thoughtful in their behaviour around school and also in most lessons. Occasionally, they become restless in lessons where the teacher speaks for too long or explanations are unclear. Pupils are proud to hold the many positions of responsibility available to them. Reception class monitors, for instance, were considerate and helpful mentors for the younger children. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are mostly cooperative and keen to share. Parish links help to encourage pupils to respect and value both themselves and others. Displays reflecting their own faith as well as others help them to appreciate cultural diversity. There have been no examples of racist incidents in the last three years. Exclusions are rare and there have been none in the past two years.

Leadership and management

The vast majority of staff but not all are excited by the challenge to make improvements to their school. Overall, there is a clear sense of purpose and determination to raise pupils' attainment because of the headteacher's high expectations of staff and pupils. Core subject leaders, for example, are knowledgeable, focused and energised by an ethos of achievement and success. Pupils and their parents and carers comment positively about recent improvements. A key focus on providing professional development and more robust performance management are beginning to provide a much sharper drive to improve pupils' outcomes. Overall, the school has demonstrated improvement since the previous inspection, notable in above average attainment in mathematics and pupils' good attendance. The school is focused on improving writing, and staff are beginning to embed writing skills in the teaching of other subjects. Actions to ensure that assessment is more accurate and reliable have resulted in the setting of challenging targets for all pupils. The resolute leadership and management, improvements in behaviour, attendance and attainment in mathematics demonstrate the school's capacity to improve further. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and the practitioners work together harmoniously. The largely new governing body is very focused on pupils' outcomes and knowledgeable about actions to improve pupils' writing. It shares the headteacher's drive and determination and, increasingly, challenges the school's performance. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and governors have taken part in child protection and safeguarding training. Governors are unequivocal in their commitment to tackling discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity. Gaps in pupils' performance in different subjects are narrowing.

The curriculum is broad and includes much enrichment which is welcomed by pupils. They are justly proud of their sporting and musical achievements. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted through spiritual assemblies, hymn singing and attractive, thought-provoking displays of art and pupils' work. Pupils have a sense of justice and fair play and are keen to learn.

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 | 54 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 14 | 49 | 32 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 20 | 39 | 34 | 7 |
| Special schools | 33 | 45 | 20 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |
| All schools | 16 | 47 | 31 | 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 to 31 December 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

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|----------------------------|---|
| 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. |
| Attendance | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| 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. |
| Floor standards | the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures |
| 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.



2 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Baxenden St John's Church of England Primary School,
Accrington, BB5 2RQ**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We would especially like to thank the pupils who met with us and those who gave us such a pleasant tour of the school. You were polite and thoughtful and we enjoyed reading your questionnaires. You told us you feel safe in school and your behaviour is improving. Your attendance is good because you enjoy coming to school. Children in the Reception classes are welcomed into school and looked after well by all of you, particularly the Reception monitors.

St John's is a satisfactory school. Your behaviour is satisfactory and you are enthusiastic learners. You make satisfactory progress in your work. You do your best work in mathematics and we would like you to improve your writing. We have asked your school to concentrate more on improving your punctuation and writing sentences. We want you to be challenged more in your classes because we know that you can reach higher standards in your work. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and we want them to experience more opportunities to play and learn, especially outdoors. You told us that your headteacher is clearly focused on improving the school further and we want all staff to be part of that.

You can help to improve your school by continuing to work hard. We know how much you enjoy achieving well and your standards in mathematics show that. We would like you to have clearer guidance about what you need to do to make your work better in all subjects.

You made our time with you memorable. We wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Marie Cordey

Lead inspector

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