

Burnley St Stephen's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119486
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291437
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Bardon

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 on roll	
School	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mr Ian Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001
School address	Woodgrove Road Burnley Lancashire BB11 3EJ
Telephone number	01282 427848
Fax number	01282 831047

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized primary school serves a disadvantaged area on the outskirts of the town. With very few exceptions, pupils are from White British families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is below average. Since the school was last inspected there have been a large number of staff changes including two changes of headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, which makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Standards are steadily rising as teachers' develop their understanding of the learning needs of the pupils. Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly average. Year 6 pupils performed particularly well in the national English tests in 2006 but the proportion of pupils who attained the higher level in mathematics and science was below average. Many pupils write well and the school has successfully raised standards in literacy. The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Many children lack basic skills when they first join the school and despite making steady progress, by the end of Reception their attainment is below that expected for their age.

Most pupils say that they enjoy school and this is shown by their good attendance. Lessons are generally interesting but on occasions variable pace and challenge makes for uneven learning and satisfactory rather than good progress. Teachers often keep up a lively conversation with pupils, extending their knowledge and promoting their understanding. Pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons is often good and they feel safe and well cared for. Most pupils are attentive and readily answer questions, although a minority quickly lose concentration when not kept fully occupied. Pupils have too few opportunities to contribute to school decision making and the school has plans for improvement. Their contributions to the community are satisfactory. Pupils have a satisfactory appreciation of the importance of healthy eating and many take regular exercise, helped by the good provision the school makes for sport. Preparation for pupils' future learning and life is satisfactory and they acquire a range of social and interpersonal skills.

The school pays due attention to the care and welfare of its pupils. Pupils find staff approachable and appreciate the help and support they receive. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers mark pupils work thoroughly and often give clear pointers on how it could be improved. Pupils' involvement in evaluating their own work is increasing but still at quite an early stage of development. The curriculum is satisfactory and currently under review to increase its relevance to pupils' learning needs.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school purposefully and staff work closely as a team. The school is steadily improving as the measures introduced over the last year or so take effect. Day to day procedures are effective and the school runs smoothly. Strategies for evaluating how well the school is functioning provide useful information but not in the detail needed to accelerate school development. Governors play an active part in the life of the school and fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science by improving the achievement of higher attaining pupils.
- Address inconsistencies in teaching and ensure that pupils benefit from the pace and challenge of the best lessons.
- Increase the rigour of school self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards in Years 2 and 6 are broadly average. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Children's attainment at the end of Reception is below average. In 2006, Year 2 pupils attained standards in the national assessments that were close to the national average in mathematics and a little above in reading and writing. Results in Year 2 have fluctuated substantially year to year but are beginning to show some consistency.

After four years in which they had been below average, the results attained by Year 6 pupils in the national tests improved in 2006 and were average overall. Pupils attained well in English, particularly in writing and results were above average at the expected and higher levels. In mathematics and science, an average proportion attained the expected level but the proportion attaining the higher level was below average. The school exceeded the targets it had set in English and met them in mathematics. Standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average. Targets for 2007 offer sufficient challenge at the expected level but are too low at the higher level. Although there are year to year variations, in general there is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, similar to that of other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Strong Christian values underpin this aspect of the school's provision. Pupils learn in an environment where personal achievement is valued and agree that they enjoy school. This is reflected in their attendance, which is higher than national averages. From a low starting point when they first join the school, pupils grow in confidence and mature into friendly, polite and courteous young people who behave well. Their achievements are celebrated often so that they feel motivated to try hard and take a pride in their work. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of why it is important to eat healthily and to keep fit and have good knowledge of how to keep safe. Older pupils take on their responsibilities as monitors around school enthusiastically and maturely. There are not yet enough opportunities for pupils of all ages to express their views, to influence school decision-making and contribute to making school a happier and safer place to be. They make satisfactory contributions to the community. Pupils' preparation for their future is satisfactory. They acquire good personal skills but do not always reach their full academic potential, particularly those capable of reaching the higher levels of attainment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and examples of well taught lessons were seen during the inspection. Teachers plan lessons carefully and usually start by giving pupils a clear explanation of what they are to learn. At times, insufficient reference is made to these learning objectives as lessons proceed and opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of how to measure their own progress are missed. The pace of learning often varies across lessons

with periods of stimulating teaching and fast progress broken by more mundane and less productive activities. Good relationships and a pleasant atmosphere encourage pupils to behave well and apply themselves during lessons. While most pupils listen attentively and work hard, they do not often put forward ideas of their own unless asked a specific question. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive well considered support from class teachers and teaching assistants and make satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers mark work conscientiously and add well chosen comments and examples to aid pupils' understanding of what they have done well and what needs further improvement. Activities are often adjusted to take account of pupils' differing abilities; although, those set for higher attaining pupils do not always challenge them enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils of all ages to make satisfactory progress. Curriculum development is at a transitional stage. In some subjects, such as science, practical tasks plus plenty of opportunities for exploration and discovery meet the learning needs of the pupils well, but in other subjects this productive approach is not yet fully utilised. Writing is promoted well in a wide range of subjects and this has a very positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. The strong emphasis the school places on providing pupils with a rounded education is seen in the wide range of interesting activities outside of lessons; for example, in sport and residential opportunities. These activities, along with good provision for personal, social and health education enables pupils to make good progress in their personal development. The curriculum for Reception children is satisfactory. Recent development has improved provision, including activities out of doors. At times, the activities children choose for themselves are not planned clearly enough and this adversely affects their progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. There are well thought out procedures for protecting and safeguarding pupils. Parents are appreciative of the attention staff pay to their children's welfare and safety. Relationships are for the most part good and pupils say that staff readily help them with any difficulties or concerns. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that pupils receive the support they need in lessons. The assessment and tracking of pupils' academic progress are satisfactory and staff have a clear picture of pupils' progress over time. Regular assessments in reading and writing are used well to check pupils' short-term progress and provide them with clear guidance to help them improve their work. These good practices are not yet used consistently across all subjects or to check the rates of progress of different groups of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Since his appointment, the headteacher has had a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of school and on the standards they attain. The school has a strong ethos based on Christian values and parents hold positive views of the provision it makes for their children's learning.

Since it was last inspected, the school has made satisfactory progress in raising standards and addressing the issues from the previous report. However, the pace of development has been uneven and adversely affected by the changes of headteachers and staff the school has experienced. Under the thoughtful direction of the current headteacher, more rigorous management procedures have been implemented; although, many of these have still to become fully embedded in the school's practices. The school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory. Procedures for measuring how well the school is performing and checking the quality of teaching and learning provide an accurate overview but not the detailed information senior staff need to accelerate the pace of development and raise standards quickly. Subject coordinators are gradually increasing the contribution they make to school management as they acquire the necessary skills. This is currently satisfactory but would benefit from a sharper focus on achievement and standards. Governance is satisfactory. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities diligently and support the school well. Their capacity to evaluate the performance of the school for themselves is still developing.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

29 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burnley St Stephen's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Lancashire, BB11 3EJ

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave us when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and spoke to us, which made us feel comfortable and welcome. Although we were with you for only two days, we thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do; a special thanks to those who met with us to talk about the school.

There were lots of things we liked about the school. It is clear that you are happy at school and that everyone gets on well. We enjoyed looking at the work in your books and thought that the quality of your writing was good. Most pupils' work in mathematics and science is satisfactory but we have asked the school to help those who are good at these subjects to do even better. You can help by always trying to think of questions, ideas and ways of working things out for yourselves. We were impressed with how neat and well presented your work was. You obviously take a pride in what you do.

When we were in lessons and around school your behaviour was good. You listened carefully to your teachers and tried hard with your work. We feel that you are growing into sensible and responsible young people who understand the importance of caring for each other. Adults look after you well and it is good that you feel safe and that you can get help if you need it. We are pleased that you are enjoying the many new sporting activities the headteacher has introduced recently. These are very important to your health and fitness.

We also looked at what else the school might do to help it improve even more. These are the things we suggested:

- make sure that all lessons move along at a good pace, give you lots of new things to learn and challenge you to think hard all of the time
- make sure everyone is clear about how to make the school even better.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and we wish you lots of luck in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Bardon and Kathryn Dodd

(School inspectors)