

Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119616
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339483
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Barbara Price
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Gray
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and observed 10 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, managers, staff, the School Improvement Partner and groups of pupils. In observing the school's work, they looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies and school development plans. In total 79 questionnaires from parents and carers were received, analysed and considered, alongside 95 questionnaires completed by the pupils and 10 by school staff.

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

- Whether lessons are promoting the best possible progress for all groups of pupils.
- Whether the improvements in learning are sustained.
- How well children learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage and whether they are effectively prepared for their National Curriculum work.
- Whether leadership is effective in taking the school forward.

Information about the school

This school is average in size. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more than twice the national average, and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

The school has attained National Healthy School status.

There have been some major changes in staffing and leadership recently. The school is temporarily led by a partnership consisting of an associate headteacher and an executive headteacher, with an acting deputy headteacher in post. The school is on a split site and a postponed programme of building works is scheduled to start in the next few weeks. At the time of inspection, the Nursery class was in one building alongside the Key Stage 2 pupils, while the Key Stage 1 pupils and the Reception Year children were in another.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Bishop Martin Primary provides a satisfactory quality of education. It has strengths in pastoral areas so that the good care, guidance and support allow pupils to develop well personally. There has been a concerted effort to boost pupils' achievement and this has resulted in some good improvements recently. Senior leaders keep a close eye on pupils' ongoing achievements, and systems for evaluating the performance of the school are thorough and accurate. At present, however, the monitoring process is not effective enough to eliminate differences in the quality of teaching between the key stages or facilitate the sharing of good practice. The governing body has been instrumental in providing stability through some very challenging times and ensuring that the drive for improvement continues. It is making good use of support from the local authority. Managers and staff share a clear vision and ambition for the future and are keen to build on the improvements already made. The capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

From a below-average starting point, children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, their skills in early writing are not sufficiently developed. Children have interesting opportunities to engage in purposeful play and explore their world indoors, but the outdoor areas do not provide an equally wide range of activity. In Key Stage 1, progress is variable but satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 2, pupils' learning accelerates because teachers assess progress frequently and ensure that work is carefully targeted to promote progress. Pupils begin to catch up, their attainment has improved considerably and, for the current Year 6, is average. Teaching is satisfactory overall and often good in Key Stage 2, especially for the older pupils. Managers recognise that the quality of teaching needs to improve in Key Stage 1 if the school is to meet its own challenging targets. Some pupils make slow progress in Year 1 because they move onto the National Curriculum work before they are ready. The skills of additional adults in Years 1 and 2 are not always used efficiently to support and challenge pupils. Sometimes, the work planned does not meet pupils' needs as it is too easy or too difficult.

The satisfactory curriculum includes a well-organised programme for promoting personal development. It is well enhanced by visits to places of interest and clubs out of school time. Pupils feel safe in this school and enjoy their learning. A drive to reduce absence has been very successful and attendance is now in line with the national average. Good partnerships with local churches, other schools and agencies bring many benefits to pupils' academic and personal development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:

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- developing the use of the outdoor areas to provide an equal range of learning to that in the indoor areas
- placing an added emphasis on the teaching of early writing skills so that children make better progress.
- Improve progress and raise attainment in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring work is always accurately targeted to build on prior learning and promote good progress, especially in the transition between the Early Years Foundation Stage work and the National Curriculum
 - ensuring that additional adults are effectively and actively engaged with pupils in promoting learning
 - facilitating the sharing of good practice between teachers across the key stages
 - injecting more rigour into monitoring to ensure that all of the above are implemented consistently and are making the intended improvements to learning.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and enjoy their lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils collaborated very well as they investigated how journalists produce their reports. Year 3 pupils worked enthusiastically as they explored the rules for rounding numbers up and down. Most pupils concentrate well in lessons but can sometimes drift off task, especially when they sit listening for too long during whole- class introductions.

On entry to the nursery, children's development is generally below that expected for the age group. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but their attainment is still below average overall as they enter Year 1, especially in early writing. Although learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, it is slower than expected for many pupils in Year 1 because they move onto National Curriculum work before they are ready. In Years 1 and 2, tasks set by teachers are not always matched to pupils' needs. Attainment is below average as pupils move into Key Stage 2. Progress accelerates in this phase; pupils correct shortfalls in their prior learning and catch up quickly. As a result, attainment is improving and standards are currently average by Year 6. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and meet their individual targets. Historically, attainment in writing has been lower for the boys compared to the girls. Teachers are dealing with the issue by choosing texts and topics to fire boys' imagination and the gap is closing.

Pupils are generally considerate of each other but boys can sometimes engage in boisterous behaviour at playtimes that makes other pupils uncomfortable. Pupils have a good awareness of moral, social and cultural issues and their good understanding of healthy living means that they enjoy plenty of exercise. Spiritual development is well supported through good links with the church. Pupils assert that they feel safe and they have a good awareness of potential dangers. For example, they work in the local community, acting as 'deputy fire safety officers' alongside professionals, such as the

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police. Attendance has improved considerably and is in line with the national average. Pupils are prepared effectively for their future education. By taking responsibility for jobs, they help in the day-to-day running of the school. The elected council members ensure that pupils' views are considered in the process of decision making.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2

¹ 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?

Teaching has a satisfactory impact on learning and there are examples of good practice in Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, teachers make the purpose of lessons clear so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them, and relationships are good. In Key Stage 2, several other good elements to teaching are embedded. These include the deployment of teaching assistants to provide targeted support; the use of accurate assessments to plan work at the correct level; providing the right amount of support or challenge; and the use of helpful targets, advice and resources to support learning. However, these good practices are not consistently seen in Key Stage 1. As a result, some work is not matched to pupils' needs, the support for learning is not as effective as it could be, and pupils are not always sure how to improve their work.

Links between subjects are developing effectively and a local network provides additional experiences, for example in sport and creative arts. Visits, visitors, after-school clubs and themed events provide good enrichment for learning. For example, pupils enjoy Spanish Day, opportunities to learn about local industry, and outdoor pursuits. The lunchtime

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Explorers club provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences and extend their spiritual development. Literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactorily applied across the curriculum and action plans are in place to develop further opportunities for applying information and communication technology skills.

Pupils' welfare is at the heart of this school's work. An overwhelming majority of pupils who filled in the inspection questionnaire agreed with the statement that 'adults in school care about me'. The learning mentor and pastoral team go to great lengths to overcome any barriers that might get in the way of learning. Pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are well supported by trained staff. A good system of merits encourages positive behaviour, effort and kindness. Pupils are proud of the awards they receive. Pupils say they would like more activities at playtimes and this is a focus for action, once the building work is complete.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior managers provide focused, determined leadership and strong direction for the school. The governing body brings a good level of expertise and experience to support school managers and has successfully steered the school through an unsettled time. As a result, attainment has risen at Key Stage 2 and attendance improved. The associate and executive headteachers work together very well, and, because they have a thorough understanding of the school's development programme, they maintain continuity in leadership. Aply supported by the deputy headteacher, they are addressing remaining issues in teaching and assessment, the curriculum and the learning environment. Teamwork is good and staff share an ambitious agenda for success. Managers check on the quality of lessons and pupils' work. Progress is tracked closely and detailed assessment records enable staff to identify and support pupils who are not making the expected progress. These systems are very effective in Key Stage 2 but are not yet rigorous enough in Key Stage 1. The sharing of skills and peer support have been effective in improving aspects of teaching in Key Stage 2 but are not yet used to best effect in Key Stage 1. Under the supervision of the bursar, administration and day-to-day management are efficient and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Safeguarding, including safe recruitment and child protection, is well established and meets requirements. Staff have regular updates in their child protection training and are well equipped to deal with any concerns. The equalities policy ensures that groups of pupils have full and equal access to all activities. However, the school recognises that standards for some pupils are still too low. Community cohesion is promoted effectively

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through a good partnership with local churches. Links with schools in contrasting areas and one overseas are developing. Governors play an active role in the life of the school and many volunteer to help in classrooms. They are currently exploring ways of improving communication with parents and carers further.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

As they enter the nursery a significant number of children have difficulties with speech and language. Their progress is satisfactory overall and sometimes good in the Reception classes, however, pupils are still not prepared enough to effectively access the Key Stage 1 curriculum. By the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is still below average overall, although it is stronger in physical development and early number work. Skills in early writing are well below average.

Children are enthusiastic to learn; they select from a range of activities and work independently. Behaviour is good. Children take turns and are willing to share resources and ideas. Leadership and management of this phase are satisfactory. Welfare arrangements meet requirements and children are safe. Links with parents and carers are good, and children benefit from a smooth introduction to Nursery and transition to the Reception classes. Plans are in place for greater collaboration and an improved shared learning environment between the two age groups, once building work is complete. At present, opportunities for learning outdoors are limited and do not mirror the wide range of activity provided indoors. Children's progress is monitored closely and activities are organised effectively to build on developing knowledge and skills. Planning places a strong emphasis on teaching reading but some opportunities for promoting early writing skills are missed.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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 parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire have positive views and the very large majority agree that children enjoy school. Quotes that reflect these opinions include: 'the teachers are friendly, helpful and easy to approach' and 'there are good activities after school'. There are commendations for the good quality of care that caters for children's needs and helps them to be safe and healthy. Inspection findings endorse these views. Some parents and carers have concerns about the way school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that pupils who experience emotional and social difficulties have good support so that disruptions to learning are rare. Some uncertainties were also expressed about the changes in staffing and the temporary nature of school leadership. The governing body has been made aware of these views and is keen to allay any worries.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bishop Martin Church of England 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	49	37	47	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	53	36	46	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	37	47	59	2	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	49	35	44	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	44	39	49	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	39	44	56	4	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	36	46	40	51	2	3	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)	26	33	43	54	3	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	35	47	59	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	33	39	49	10	13	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	20	51	65	6	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	24	43	54	10	13	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	47	36	46	5	6	0	0

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). 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">■ 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.



11 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School, Skelmersdale, WN8 9BN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us.

Bishop Martin Primary is a happy and safe school. It provides you with a satisfactory standard of education and helps you to develop into well-mannered and caring people. You get on well together and take good care of each other. Thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who chatted with us. It was good to hear comments such as, 'the teachers give us lots of help' and 'it's cool to be kind so people help each other.'

You are keen to learn and work hard. You are making better progress. Those of you in Key Stage 2 are reaching higher standards than before and meeting the targets that your teachers set. Well done! However, learning could be improved further in the Nursery and Reception classes and Key Stage 1 so we have asked the adults in your school to:

- make sure those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes learn quicker by providing a wider range of activities outdoors and more opportunities for you to develop early skills in writing
- help those of you in Key Stage 1 to make better progress by providing more support on the learning journey between the Reception and Year 1 classes, making sure that work is always set at the right level for you and that you have plenty of adult support.

In addition I have asked your teachers to check lessons to make sure that all these improvements are working.

You can help by continuing to work hard, being keen to learn and keeping up the improved attendance. Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had. Please accept our best wishes for the future.

Lynne Read

Lead inspector

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