

# Accrington Benjamin Hargreaves Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119441
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379801
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Terry McDermott

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	163
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kathleen Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Nicol
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Barnfield Street Accrington BB5 2AQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 232130
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	bursar@benjaminhargreaves.lancs.sch.uk

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## **Introduction**

### **Inspection team**

Terry McDermott  
Peter Marsh

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons taught by six teachers for a total of approximately 11 hours. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, listened to pupils reading, looked at the school's methods for tracking pupils' progress and at a range of school documents, including its policies, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records and samples of pupils' work. Responses from 77 parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

## **Information about the school**

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Key Stage 2 classes are taught in mixed-age groups. The proportion of girls in the school is lower than usually found. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. The school meets the current floor standard, whereby the government sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school holds the Primary Quality Mark and Investors in People awards.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
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<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Parents and carers express complete confidence in the work of the school. Attendance is above average and behaviour, good. It is not a good school because the quality of teaching is too inconsistent and because leaders do not always accurately evaluate the amount of learning taking place in lessons. Evaluation of pupils' progress over time lacks rigour.
- Achievement is satisfactory. From starting points usually below average, pupils make variable progress through the school to reach broadly average levels of attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The school's developing and more accurate tracking system indicates that progress is improving in each phase of the school.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Good relationships exist between adults and pupils. Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good. The best lessons challenge all pupils to work things out for themselves, at their own pace. Sometimes, teachers spend too long giving the same explanation to all pupils in their class. Marking does not always tell pupils what needs to be done next to improve.
- Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils are safe and take good care of each other. They cooperate well when playing or working in groups. They say that bullying rarely happens. When given responsibility, they carry out their assignments sensibly.
- Leadership of teaching and management of performance are satisfactory. Senior leaders are tackling issues in the school that require improvement. Actions taken to improve learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, to improve the teaching of reading in Key Stage 1 and to raise standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2 are all successful. The accountability of middle leaders for progress in their subject areas is at an early stage of development.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching by:
  - providing more frequent opportunities for pupils to work independently in lessons
  - ensuring that work set in lessons meets the learning needs of all pupils accurately
  - giving consistent guidance when marking work on what pupils need to do to improve
  - ensuring that good standards of presentation and handwriting are maintained throughout the school.
- Ensure that subject leaders observe directly, evaluate, and give unequivocal feedback on the quality of learning taking place in lessons.
- Ensure that senior leaders and governors take full account of summary information on the progress pupils are making.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage make effective use of their good indoor but restricted outside resources. This helps children get off to a good start and quickly learn to cooperate and work and play together. Children progress well and begin to catch up in reading rapidly because of the skilful teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) that children now receive. The good relationships they develop in the Early Years Foundation Stage are maintained throughout school as they grow older, and this underpins their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 because basic reading skills are taught frequently, regularly and skilfully. Pupils make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to attack new words. They read regularly and enthusiastically, and are comfortable reading aloud. Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average at the end of Year 6. Recent rearrangements to the whole school curriculum have yet to be fully embedded, though there are encouraging improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the teaching of reading in Key Stage 1, and in mathematics in Key Stage 2. All pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make progress equal to that found nationally, irrespective of their starting points. Some pupils make good progress. Those parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire unanimously felt that their children make good progress but inspection evidence showed achievement to be satisfactory.

Learning in lessons is satisfactory because work set does not always meet individual pupils' learning needs well enough. There are occasions when work is too easy for some and too hard for others and this restricts progress. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are always ready to try something different or to find things out for themselves. They listen respectfully to their peers. This helps them to deepen their understanding by hearing alternative explanations. They sustain their concentration well when work is of a practical

nature. Standards of presentation in pupils' books are inconsistent. Good handwriting habits firmly developed in Key Stage 1 are not always maintained in Key Stage 2.

## **Quality of teaching**

Parents and carers regard teaching as good. Teaching is satisfactory overall although some was seen to be good. This lack of consistency explains why pupils' learning over time is variable and achievement, satisfactory. When pupils are set work that challenges them to think for themselves, they approach it with enthusiasm and curiosity, and make good progress. This was seen to good effect in a Year 3 mathematics lesson about co-ordinates. Five separate groups of pupils were busily engaged in tasks of varying difficulty. They were sharing ideas, testing them out, reaching their own conclusions, and then using their new knowledge to enthusiastically correct the teacher's 'mistakes'. Concentration was sustained well, the pupils all learned something new and were excited about what they had learned. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to work in this independent way. When pupils are not challenged to work hard and do their best, they lose concentration and standards slip. This is best exemplified by the poor handwriting and generally untidy presentation seen in the books of some older pupils. Marking does not consistently tackle these issues or set out clearly how pupils can improve.

The well-resourced classrooms help to inspire pupils' curiosity about the world around them and support their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. At its best the curriculum leads to well planned lessons where teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn. These lessons move forward smartly, with teachers and other adults moving around the different groups in the class, making sure that pupils are on the right track. Questioning is usually random and rapid, seeking opinions but always with explanations. Pupils are happy to speak aloud without any fear of ridicule. The pace of learning slows when all pupils receive the same explanation or task to do. The more-able pupils finish quickly; they then wait patiently for the next task, but it means their progress is not as good as it might be. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and most play a vital role in supporting different groups of pupils. This ensures that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time, although some make better progress. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, make the same variable progress as their peers.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils arrive in school on time and ready to learn. Their attendance is consistently above average. They come to school regularly because, they say, 'We are happy here'. Behaviour has been and remains consistently good throughout school whether in classrooms or outside at break times. Pupils are able to explain with confidence how they know they are safe in school. They are well aware of the dangers they may face outside the school. Parents and carers are accurate in their extremely positive views about pupils' safety and, without exception, feel their children are well looked after. The school maintains detailed records of unacceptable behavior which is rare. The small number of pupils whose behaviour may sometimes give cause for concern is managed very successfully. Pupils, parents and carers comment that incidents of bullying of all types are very unusual, and are confident that any incidents are swiftly and appropriately dealt with. Links with parents and carers are strong, and this provides very solid grounding for the excellent relationships between pupils and staff maintained throughout the school.

The school has a calm atmosphere because the values of respect, tolerance and co-operation are consistently upheld by adults throughout the school. As a result, pupils are polite, well mannered and considerate to each other, to visitors and to the environment. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They leave school as well balanced young citizens, satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Leadership and management**

The persistent and steadfast leadership of the headteacher is guiding the school steadily forward. She is well supported by her capable deputy headteacher. They use professional development appropriately to improve teaching. Recent improvements, particularly in reading in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2, stem directly from their focus on accelerating learning and demonstrate satisfactory capacity for further improvement. However, a wider leadership group comprising subject leaders is not yet fully established and a great deal of responsibility for improvement still rests on the shoulders of senior leaders. The governing body is dedicated and hard working in supporting the school, but does not have a wholly accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. Governors have not always held the school to account for its satisfactory performance in recent years with sufficient rigour. They ensure the school has good procedures to promote safeguarding which meet requirements and actively promote equality of opportunity for all pupils in this harmonious school. There is no evidence of any sort of discrimination.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, though some aspects are good. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum provides a language-rich learning environment, with well-planned activities for children to select for themselves. There are good opportunities throughout the school for all groups of pupils to take responsibilities and extend their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Work on improving reading skills and increasing proficiency in calculation is successful. The new creative curriculum, based on themed topics to provide pupils opportunities to practise and develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills in a range of circumstances, has not been in place for sufficient time to show its full impact on pupils' learning. Nonetheless, there is convincing evidence to show that previously slower learning in different parts of the school has been eradicated, though its legacy of lower attainment has still to work through the system.

Good partnerships with other schools locally, with community groups and a wide range of external professionals, support all pupils' learning well. These partnerships ensure that every individual pupil, including those whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable, is able to access and benefit from all that the school has to offer.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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](http://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.



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## Common terminology used by inspectors

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.
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.
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.**



28 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Accrington Benjamin Hargreaves Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School, Accrington, BB5 2AQ**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed visiting you in your lessons and talking with you. We were particularly impressed with the way you get on so well with each other and with the adults in your school. You pay good attention to the teachers and to each other in lessons.

We found that Benjamin Hargreaves is a satisfactory school, and these are some of the best things about it.

- The adults in school take very good care of you, and work hard to ensure that you are safe.
- Your attendance is above average, helping you learn a lot when you are given the opportunities.

To help you learn more and make better progress, we have asked the adults who run the school to make lessons better by doing the following.

- Making sure that all work set accurately meets your different learning needs.
- Checking more closely and more often that you are all learning as much as you should be.
- Giving you more opportunity to work independently and find things out for yourselves.
- Making sure that when marking your work, teachers consistently tell you clearly what to do to get better.

You can help your school to get better by always trying your best and continuing to enjoy and attend school. All the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott  
Lead Inspector

