

Burscough Bridge Methodist School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119402
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379793
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	40
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Bradley-Jones
Headteacher	Anne Mains
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 10 lessons taught by three teachers and three teaching assistants. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding pupils, the curriculum, the school's development plan, pupils' progress and attainment and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. Inspectors scrutinised the views of staff and pupils and analysed 17 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- Whether all groups of pupils and, in particular, the higher-attainers in Key Stage 2 achieve their potential in English.
- Whether pupils' writing skills are sufficiently applied in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Whether pupils' personal development is a strength of the school.
- The effectiveness of leaders and the governing body in driving improvement since the last inspection and providing a good capacity to improve further.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller in size than others of its type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities are average. The majority of pupils are White British and few are from minority ethnic groups. The school has gained the Activemark award and national Healthy School status. The school comprises three mixed-aged classes. It is in a formal collaboration with another small primary school. The executive headteacher was appointed in April 2011 and is headteacher in both schools. The deputy headteacher manages the school for two and a half days each week.

The school runs a breakfast- and after-school club which was included in this inspection.

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

This is a good school. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire overwhelmingly agree. They particularly appreciate the individual attention their children receive as a result of the 'lovely family atmosphere'. When pupils join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage their learning skills are generally below those typical for their age. By the time they leave in Year 6 their attainment is above average in English and mathematics. Pupils' current work and the school's own data show that all pupils make good progress during their time in the school. The staff pay very close attention to pupils' personal needs and this contributes very effectively to the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. Furthermore, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, their contribution to school and the wider community and understanding of what is needed to lead healthy and safe lifestyles, are outstanding.

An excellent partnership between home and school, coupled with pupils' above-average attendance rates, their positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour contribute well to their enjoyment of school. Good teaching is supported by the successful use of assessment information to ensure that lessons are sufficiently challenging in the mixed-aged classes and particularly for higher-attaining pupils. However, teachers do not consistently involve pupils in reviewing their own learning or provide enough guidance in marking to help them improve their work further. The good-quality curriculum engages pupils' interest well and is enriched by a wide range of activities, before, after and during the school day, which extend pupils' personal development very effectively.

The school knows itself well and how to achieve further success because its self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. There is a shared commitment among all staff to drive forward improvement and the skilful management of learning ensures that pupils' achievement is good. The governing body supports the school well, particularly in ensuring that safeguarding of pupils is good. Outstanding community cohesion provides pupils with many opportunities to learn from the wide range of local, national and international communities with which they link. The very successful collaboration established with another small school has widened opportunities for professional development for staff. It has successfully built upon the school's previous strengths by providing a very clear and strategic plan for improvement. This, coupled with rising standards of attainment, demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupil's achievement by ensuring that teachers:
 - regularly involve pupils in reviewing their own learning
 - use marking consistently to guide pupils in what they need to do to improve their work further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement is good because they are enthusiastic about learning and work hard in lessons. They are keen to answer questions and to 'have a go' at trying things out, particularly when lessons are practical and involve them in applying skills previously learnt. For instance, in a mathematics lesson, pupils learnt at a fast rate when they were challenged to work with each other to discuss, review and feed back to their teacher what they had learnt about fractions in the lesson. However, this high level of involvement of pupils in their own learning is not evident in all lessons. Nevertheless, the overall pace of learning in lessons throughout the school is good. The number of pupils in each year group is very small and staff pay close attention to individual levels of attainment and rates of progress. As a result, any gaps in learning are swiftly identified and tackled. The school's comprehensive assessment data show that the attainment of the large majority of pupils currently in the two mixed-age Key Stage 2 classes is above average in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them the most vulnerable make good progress. Their work with specialist support staff and teaching assistants in small learning groups develops their self-esteem very effectively and has a positive impact on their learning.

Pupils enjoy school and say it is a happy place where 'teachers really care about you'. Behaviour is good and pupils show an excellent understanding of safety for themselves and others. They say they feel very safe and can go to any adult if a problem arises. Pupils are very proud of their school and take on a wide range of responsibilities, such as school councillors or play leaders, looking after the younger children in the Reception class. They are particularly pleased that their ideas were taken into account recently when new computers were installed. Pupils' involvement in the local canal wharf heritage project, when they learnt the importance of valuing the past and preserving the future, made a strong contribution to their local community. Pupils experience the benefits of healthy lifestyles through activities such as yoga and cycling training. Weekly swimming lessons develop their water-survival skills very well. Pupils explain that this is very important as, 'our school is near the canal'. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They talk knowledgeably about the dangers of smoking and are able to make sensible choices about food at lunchtime. Thought-provoking assemblies accelerate pupils' spiritual experiences and understanding very effectively. Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong and are very considerate towards one another. Pupils think deeply about the experiences of others and the opportunities to learn about children from a wider range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds are outstanding.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between pupils and adults are extremely positive and are characterised by good humour. In the outstanding lessons observed during the inspection skilful questioning enabled pupils to work things out for themselves and teachers promoted teamwork and pupils' independent thinking well. A stronger focus since the last inspection on extending pupils' writing skills within the other subjects they study has paid dividends. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is further enhanced by the positive comments made by teachers in their marking. The developing focus the school places on making links across subjects through topic-based learning is helping pupils develop good opportunities to apply their literacy, numeracy and information, communication and technology (ICT) skills. Their enjoyment is enriched further by an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. Such opportunities enable them to develop their interests and talents well.

Parents and carers speak very positively about the outstanding care and support their children receive from all adults, and how this contributes exceedingly well to their children's excellent personal development. 'The school has helped our family with many difficult issues over the years with understanding and kindness' is a comment typical of those received. They praise many elements of the school's work, for instance, the benefits of their children attending the breakfast- and after-school clubs. Very effective links with external support agencies ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning. Arrangements to prepare pupils for high school are well-planned and help to ensure a smooth transition to their next stage of education.

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?

The new leadership team has rapidly gained the full confidence of staff, pupils, and parents and carers. Strong teamwork between the senior leaders and all staff provides the school with clear direction and a heightened ambition to improve. This is evident, for instance, in the way the school is expecting more pupils to attain the higher levels in English and mathematics. Leaders have successfully maintained the culture established in the school of outstanding care, guidance and support for all pupils and their families. Close attention is paid to ensure that provision meets pupils' needs. Racism or harassment in any form are not tolerated. An ethos of 'children first' is firmly established in the school, and pupils' current good levels of achievement promote good equality of opportunity for all. The governing body provides good leadership and makes sure that all statutory requirements are fully met. They meticulously check that all safeguarding requirements are fully in place and pupils' safety is given high priority within the school's work. The management and monitoring of teaching and learning are good. This is undertaken by all staff whilst the governing body are extending their role in this work. Links with parents and carers are outstanding. The school grasps every opportunity, through regular information meetings and questionnaires, to gauge and respond to their views. Partnerships with external agencies are outstanding. The collaboration process has provided excellent opportunities for the sharing of best practice between the two schools for the benefit of pupils' learning. The impact of this is demonstrated in pupils' good achievement and enjoyment of school. The school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding in the local community and through excellent links established with pupils within the United Kingdom and globally. For instance, links with pupils in schools in Birmingham and Serbia provide pupils with outstanding opportunities to learn and appreciate different cultures and religions.

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children’s learning and development gets off to a good start in this happy and fun-filled environment. They have good opportunities to learn through an appropriate diet of activities they have chosen for themselves and those they are directed to by adults. A good range of opportunities is provided, indoors and outdoors, which develop children's physical and creative skills well. They improve their speaking and listening skills as they learn to share and take turns as they play. Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning and in particular in language and calculation. Children rapidly learn to get along with each other and benefit from playing with and learning alongside the Years 1 and 2 children in their class. Teaching is good because planning is precise and involves all adults. They carefully record the small steps in learning that each child makes and this is used effectively to plan the next stage. Adults incorporate children’s ideas and interests into their learning activities and there are plenty of opportunities for children to choose their own play.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well. Staff take very good care of children so that they feel very safe and happy. There are excellent links with parents and carers who are well-informed and involved in their children’s education. Overall, children make good progress from their individual starting points and begin Year 1 with average standards.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

All the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed their full support for the work of the school. They value highly the welcoming, caring atmosphere that adults generate. Inspection evidence supports their positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burscough Bridge Methodist 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 inspector received 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 40 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	94	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	76	4	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	82	3	18	0	0	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)	13	76	3	18	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	82	3	18	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	88	1	6	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	88	2	12	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	94	1	6	0	0	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	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 are 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 up 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.



5 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burscough Bridge Methodist School, Near Ormskirk, L40 0SG

I would like to thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We especially enjoyed chatting to you in school and on the playground. I was very impressed with your confidence in sharing with me how you enjoy being school councillors and how proud you are to belong to your school.

You go to a good school. These are some of the best things about it.

- Reception children have lots of fun and enjoy learning through play.
- The senior leaders and members of the governing body lead and manage the school well.
- All adults take outstanding care of you.
- You told us that you feel very safe, and you have an excellent knowledge of how to lead a healthy life.
- You really enjoy having responsibilities such as helping with the canal wharf project.
- Your behaviour is good and you make good progress in English and mathematics by the time you leave Year 6.

To make the school even better and to help you to attain even higher, I have asked the school to look for more ways for you to discuss with your teachers what you learn in lessons and to give you more guidance when they mark your work so you know what you need to do to improve further.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and to do your best to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Clare Henderson
Lead inspector

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