

# Brindle St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119462
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379808
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Jennifer Platt

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>	67
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kathy Whyte
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janet Webborn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Water Street Brindle Chorley PR6 8NH
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Jennifer Platt

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector visited 10 lessons taught by three teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils from Years 2 and 6 read to the inspector. Pupils' books were scrutinised with a focus on writing. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documents including the school development plan, records on safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and pupils' progress data. The inspector examined questionnaires from pupils and 35 completed by parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This primary school is much smaller than average. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. Class 1 includes children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils from Years 1 and 2. The vast majority are from White British heritage and no pupils are identified as speaking English as an additional language. The number of pupils supported at school action plus and pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the government floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected by the government. There has been a change of headteacher recently and teaching staff have also changed since the last inspection. The school has a before-school club offering provision for up to eight pupils and an after-school club for up to 16 pupils. The school has received Eco award, Healthy Schools status and Activemark.

**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>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because attainment in writing is not as strong as in other subjects and, although good overall, there are relative shortcomings in teaching. Nonetheless, this is a very happy school with excellent relationships and a wonderful, caring ethos.
- Achievement is good. Progress is good and accelerates in Key Stage 2. Pupils leave school with well-above-average attainment. Writing, although above average, is not as high as reading and mathematics. Handwriting is not consistently neat and in Key Stage 1 the more-able pupils do not always make enough progress in writing.
- Teaching is good, with examples of outstanding practice at the upper stages of Key Stage 2. Pupils say they enjoy lessons because teachers make learning fun. This is because teachers add excitement to the lessons by using a variety of activities including discussion, information and communication technology, and drama. Assessment is usually used successfully to challenge pupils. Occasionally, in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, expectations of the quality of work pupils are expected to produce are not consistently high enough.
- Behaviour is good overall. Some minor restlessness occurs when pupils lose interest. Older pupils behave impeccably and their attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils are highly knowledgeable of how to keep safe. Spirituality is excellent. Singing in assemblies is truly inspirational and reflects a school where pupils enjoy coming together as a community.
- Leadership and management are effective. The management of performance is good. Improved tracking of pupils' progress leads to swift interventions if it is identified that a pupil is underperforming. The leadership of teaching has effectively tackled weaker aspects, although a few minor concerns remain. As yet, the new subject leaders' monitoring roles are not fully embedded and the most effective practice is not shared amongst staff.

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

- Improve attainment and progress in writing by:
  - ensuring consistency in the teaching of handwriting throughout the school
  - checking that the more-able pupils are sufficiently challenged in Key Stage 1.
- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
  - ensuring that all lessons go at pace and are sufficiently challenging
  - keeping a close eye on pupils as they work, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and insisting that they always produce their very best work
  - embedding the monitoring role of subject leaders and sharing the excellent practice seen in some lessons.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Virtually every response from parents and carers agreed with the inspector that progress is good. In lessons learning is effective because pupils enjoy what is on offer and are eager to succeed. In Years 5 and 6 it was a delight to listen to pupils discussing enthusiastically the pros and cons of different versions of *Romeo and Juliet*, including a ballet performance. Previous difference between the attainment of boys and girls has been eliminated because themes motivate boys. This was reflected in Years 3 and 4 when the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) led to good learning about their favourite Star Wars characters. As a result, pupils developed research and writing skills. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils are grouped according to their ability in letters and sounds and this enhances their reading skills. Learning is less effective for this age group when they are taught as a whole class and the attitude to learning wanes for a few who do not focus on their work enough.

The very low numbers in each year make the use of data not totally reliable and judgements take into consideration the trend over the last three years. The overall attainment on entry to school is broadly average. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage with the majority reaching, and many exceeding, the level expected for their age, especially in social skills and aspects of numeracy. Most show a secure understanding of counting and solve simple sums. Knowledge of letters and sounds is closer to average and the school has refreshed teaching skills in this aspect.

Good progress is sustained in Key Stages 1 and 2 and attainment as pupils leave school is well above average. In Years 1 and 2, attainment is above average in reading and mathematics. Most read confidently, making good use of letters and their sounds to decode new words. Writing has been lower than other subjects and currently is closer to average. Pupils' work lacks accuracy in the use of the punctuation and grammar required to attain the higher Level 3. A previous dip in Key Stage 2 has been eradicated and the accelerated progress pupils make in Years 5 and 6 leads to well-above-average attainment by the time they leave the school. In mathematics an impressive number exceed the level expected for their age. In response to inspirational teaching of English, writing improves at a brisk pace.

Pupils express their ideas using an imaginative vocabulary and a range of punctuation, although not all write neatly. Attainment in reading is well above average. Pupils are enthusiastic readers, swapping books with each other and keeping records of their favourite authors.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Provision for these pupils is effective and the use of support adults has led to more interventions and useful guidance in class. Those with very precise special needs often make excellent progress in overcoming their barriers to learning.

## **Quality of teaching**

Parents and carers are unanimous that teaching is at least good. Inspection evidence supports this view and in Years 5 and 6 teaching is excellent. Lessons have many positive features and pupils say they find the variety of work interesting. Mathematics is taught successfully, with teachers showing good subject knowledge and using questions effectively to extend learning. Teachers make good use of ICT to consolidate learning. Video clips of Romeo and Juliet made a significant contribution to the success of a Year 5 and 6 literacy lesson. The clips showed thorough preparation and led to most effective learning as well as enhancing pupils' cultural awareness. In Year 2, pupils extended their ICT skills and understanding of direction by programming simple robotic toys. In Key Stage 2 work is matched accurately to pupils' ability. More-able pupils are fully challenged, as was seen in mathematics when these pupils worked independently with more complex problems than others in the class. They rose to the challenge with pride and success. This is not always as obvious for the younger pupils, with examples of the more able pupils being easily distracted and not producing sufficient high-quality work. Marking is often rigorous and pupils are reminded how to improve. Occasionally, comments are too positive when previous work shows higher standards.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from opportunities to work independently, as well as with an adult. During the inspection heavy rain restricted learning in the outdoors. Photographic evidence reflects an imaginative variety of experiences extending learning to the outdoors, including role play and construction activities. For example, the postman called to collect their letters including, from one child, 'The best school ever.'

The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants are trained to support specific difficulties and offer unobtrusive guidance in lessons and in individual sessions.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The overwhelming majority of parents, carers and pupils agree with the inspector that behaviour is good and this is typical for the school. This was evident in most lessons and around the school. Only occasionally is there any disruption to learning and incidents are dealt with effectively by staff. Older pupils show exemplary behaviour. They are wonderful role models for the younger pupils. This was evident when different age-groups shared a massage session in the hall. Behaviour and respect for each other was impeccable. These sessions are a regular feature of the school and pupils say they reduce stress.

Pupils say there is no bullying. They are very well informed about different types of bullying and use phrases such as 'being different is OK' and 'find the positive things about difference'. They know how to keep safe and recall the many important messages from visitors on how to look after themselves. They know how to use the internet safely and have discussed cyber-bullying via video clips and workshops. Pupils enjoy school and it is not surprising that attendance is above average.

## **Leadership and management**

The new headteacher has very effectively audited the school and responded promptly to shortcomings. One successful outcome is more consistency in teaching. Regular monitoring is effective, although subject leaders are not yet involved in this and some minor areas to develop remain. Nevertheless, monitoring results in staff training and performance management targeting the correct areas of need. Self-evaluation is accurate with clear priorities. Actions are practical and realistic. On the whole, outcomes link to raising attainment, although it is not always clear how success is to be measured. More rigorous tracking of pupils' progress is in place and staff are more accountable for progress. The advantage of a small school is fully exploited as all staff attend the regular pupil progress meetings and share their knowledge of past pupils. Success is evident in adjustments to the curriculum to ensure boys do as well as girls. This reflects the effective promotion of equality of opportunities. Although some variability in progress remains, especially for the more-able pupils, there is no significant difference between groups of pupils. This is a strong community with no harassment. Attainment remains well above average and, with stability in staffing established, the capacity to improve is good.

Members of the governing body are very supportive and offer effective advice, especially regarding finances and health and safety. As a result, safeguarding meets requirements, with specific attention given to risk assessments.

Visitors cannot fail to be impressed by the high quality of singing and art work. The Olympic pictograms and medals are most striking. Imaginative themes reflect a rich curriculum that promotes skills across subjects. The needs of most pupils are met with only a little variation between groups. Pupils enjoy many memorable visits and occasions. The school performances are a highlight for the community. The variety of skills makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show respect for other faiths, for example recognising the significance of fasting for Muslims. The school has active links with a school in Uganda and is establishing contact with a local school with a different intake to their village school. Relationships with parents and carers are very positive and all who replied to the questionnaire would recommend the school to others.





## 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](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.

## 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.
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.**



25 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Brindle St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Chorley PR6 8NH**

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave me when I recently visited your school. I enjoyed my visit although the weather was so awful. It was a pity it ruined your sporting event and I hope this has happened now on a drier day.

You go to a good school and make good progress. Many of you leave school with attainment that is above average. You contribute to your school being such a friendly place to learn by your caring attitudes towards each other. I think your singing is amazing and it was delightful to attend assembly and also to see you enjoying peer massage sessions. It is not surprising your attendance is above average. Teaching is good and lessons include many interesting activities. Teachers plan a wide range of visits and visitors and I am sure you will all have many happy memories of your time at school. I think there are some changes that the school can make to improve your progress even more and these are:

- Make sure you all make as much progress as possible in writing, especially the younger pupils who find learning easy, and for all of you to try to improve your handwriting.
- Check that all lessons are exciting and tasks are set at just the right level, and that teachers insist you always do your very best.

It was really a pleasure to meet you all. I am sure the leavers' production will be a great success. You are a credit to your school and your families.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Platt  
Lead Inspector

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