

# Bamber Bridge St Aidan's Church of England Primary School

Larch Grove, Bamber Bridge, Preston, PR5 6GX

**Inspection dates** 23–24 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Most pupils make broadly expected progress in reading writing and mathematics, but, by the end of Year 6 not enough exceed the expected standard for their age.
- Although teaching is improving, there is very little that is outstanding and some that needs improvement; much of it is good but teaching is not consistently strong enough to enable all pupils to reach their full potential.
- Some lessons are conducted at too slow a pace to make the best use of time available for learning.
- Leaders and managers are not sufficiently checking the impact of the changes they have made to help raise standards and improve teaching.
- The governing body needs more detail about the progress different groups of pupils make so that it can check the value for money the school is getting for its expenditure.
- Even though there has been a huge improvement this year, pupils who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium still do not perform as well as other pupils.

### The school has the following strengths

- Teaching assistants are making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, for instance when helping them to improve their reading and communication skills.
- Pupils behave well and their attendance has risen from below to above average over the past two years.
- Pupils are keen to learn. The impact of improving teaching can be seen in the increasingly good progress pupils are making.
- A good range of well-attended after-school clubs and a wide range of small group activities throughout the day are helping pupils to make better progress and broaden their horizons.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 12 lessons; two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative from Best Start Lancashire.
- Many informal discussions took place with staff and pupils.
- The inspector took into account the views of nine parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and school data about their past and current progress.
- Documents relating to behaviour, safeguarding, attendance and school improvement were looked at alongside those relating to self-evaluation.

## Inspection team

Alastair Younger, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is lower than average.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above the national average.
- A much higher proportion of pupils than is usually found are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Currently, this stands at almost a half of all pupils and nearly three quarters of those are in the Reception class.
- There are currently four looked after children.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

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

- Strengthen teaching so that it is consistently good or better to help pupils make more rapid progress by:
  - increasing expectations of what average-attaining pupils can achieve to help more of them make better progress in order to exceed their targets
  - monitoring carefully how well teachers make use of the time available for pupils to learn and ensure that all lessons proceed at a good pace
  - making sure that the daily performance of all teachers matches that which initially led to their promotion to the upper pay spine.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
  - evaluating very carefully the impact of initiatives aimed at helping to raise achievement among pupils receiving the pupil premium
  - improving the reporting by subject leaders to the governing body by ensuring that in addition to stating what they have done they make clear the impact that their actions have had, particularly on pupils' achievement
  - making sure that the governing body keeps a close check on the value for money the school gives, especially in relation to matching staffing costs to results in raising standards.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Most children join the school the Reception class with skills and abilities that are slightly below average, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their emotional development. They join Year 1 having made good progress, with most of them reaching the standards expected for their age.
- Throughout the rest of the school, achievement requires improvement because pupils do not build sufficiently on this promising start. They join Year 1 with broadly average skills and leave Year 6 at a broadly average level of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In a national check of pupils' understanding of phonics last year, Year 1 pupils were very close to the national average.
- Published figures for 2011 suggest that Year 6 pupils had made poor progress after leaving Key Stage 1. Part of this is explained by over-optimistic assessment at the end of Year 2 but there is also an acknowledgement that these pupils were not taught well enough earlier in Key Stage 2. This is no longer the case. Assessment is now more accurate and carefully moderated and teaching has improved.
- The better use of teachers' strengths and expertise has resulted in pupils more frequently being taught well, and during the inspection most pupils were seen to be making good progress. The work in pupils' books and the results of recent assessment support the view that pupils are currently making better progress, though not necessarily good enough to help standards to rise to above average by the end of the current year.
- Assessments in summer 2011 showed that the attainment of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium was dreadful. Only a quarter of them reached the level expected for their age before leaving. In response, many initiatives to support these pupils have been introduced to help them improve their reading, writing and social skills. The school is also working closely and effectively with the local authority's Best Start team to create supportive links between the school and the families involved. As a result, a year later, nearly three quarters of the pupils supported by the premium reached age expectations by the end of Year 6. It is very clear that the gap in attainment is closing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and also the few looked after children are well supported in their learning, behaviour and social development to ensure they are at no disadvantage. Frequently, their attainment is lower than for other pupils but from their starting points their progress is very similar.

### The quality of teaching

### Requires improvement

- Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good. None was inadequate but none was outstanding. Records show that stronger teachers are gradually replacing the weaker ones.
- Given that all teachers are on upper or leadership pay scales, better teaching should be expected. In the recent past, some teachers have shown reluctance to change and to accept constructive advice about how to improve their practice; this is a rapidly receding scenario.
- That teaching is improving across the whole school is evident in the fact that school data and the evidence of inspection show that no group of pupils is currently seen to be underachieving. Nevertheless, while a few upper- and lower-attaining pupils exceed the standards expected for their age it is rare for middle attainers to do so.
- Children in the Reception class are usually well taught but there is a tendency at times for adults to direct activities too much rather than letting children learn how to work things out for themselves.
- Sometimes learning is slowed by teachers interrupting learning to address minor indiscretions by pupils which could be equally well be dealt with by a classroom assistant without

interrupting the learning of the whole class. Time is also sometimes wasted because teachers do not always give enough thought to the organisation of activities that involve only a few pupils while leaving the larger majority waiting for attention.

- Teachers are good at making learning relevant. They make good use of real life situations to help pupils understand the importance of their learning. Activities are frequently very effectively linked to enrichment activities. Year 4 and 5 pupils were observed on several occasions following up a visit they had made to Blackpool illuminations the night before the inspection as they learned about the value of powerfully descriptive words in advertising. Year 6 pupils were seen to be responding enthusiastically to the visit of a storyteller on the first day of inspection as they developed their own expressive versions of the narrated stories. Through activities such as these teachers are also fostering pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Teaching assistants are making a good contribution to pupils' learning and behaviour. They lead many of the intervention activities formed to support underperforming pupils. These include support for improving things such as handwriting, speaking and listening, communication through role play, and reading, including a phonics (the sounds that letters make) 'booster'. Once a week, a skilled teaching assistant also runs, with considerable expertise, a highly popular and successful 'Clever Tots' club for toddlers and their parents as a promotional activity to recruit children into the school and to contribute to the needs of the community.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils behave well in and around school. Lunch and break times are pleasant, harmonious occasions where pupils get on well with one another. Lessons are rarely disrupted by bad behaviour but, very occasionally, pupils' niggles distract teachers and slow the pace of learning.
- A few of the younger pupils are somewhat wilful and oblivious to the impact of their behaviour on others, but older pupils show how well they have developed upstanding social and moral values and have become a credit to the school and their families.
- Two years ago attendance was below average. It is now above average. This matches improvements seen throughout other aspects of the school over the same period, especially in terms of improvements in teaching and the curriculum.
- In most lessons, pupils show enthusiasm for learning and their attitudes towards it are good. Very occasionally though, especially when pupils are working in small groups or pairs, a minority of pupils sit back and let others do their work for them.
- There is a pleasing openness among pupils; they are inquisitive and polite and there is not a shred of arrogance or discrimination in the way they express their views. There have been no exclusions in recent years, the last recorded instance of racism was in 2009, and on the very rare occasions that pupils feel they are being bullied the causes are quickly addressed.
- Quite simply, pupils get on well with one another and as a result they feel safe and happy and enjoy coming to school.

### **The leadership and management require improvement**

- Four years ago the headteacher inherited a scenario described by the then and current Chair of the Governing Body as a 'school on its knees' and with 'a very entrenched teaching staff'. The school was later categorised by the local authority as one that had serious educational difficulties. It has taken too long to redress the situation but the speed of improvement is rapidly gathering pace as the headteacher has adapted her leadership style and is holding staff more accountable for pupils' performance. In the words of the local authority, which is supported by the evidence of inspection, 'concerns are diminishing'.
- At the time of the last inspection, subject leadership was identified as a weakness; it is much improved but when these leaders report to the governing body they report what has been

done over the previous year rather than what impact it has had and what pupils have achieved as a result. Nevertheless, it is good that subject leaders can talk authoritatively about what they are doing to promote improvement and raise standards and how they are assessing pupils' progress.

- Important leadership and management decisions over the past year have involved staffing changes. The personnel remain the same but responsibilities have been radically changed with good teachers having contracts extended and others accepting reduced hours.
- Performance management and appraisal procedures have been considerably strengthened over the past year. There is a better emphasis on linking teacher performance to pupils' progress, thus holding them to better account for their work. What is missing is the need to assess whether teachers on upper pay scales have maintained the standards that resulted in them gaining them before the appointment of the current headteacher.
- Many good and effective initiatives have been introduced over the past year. These include timetabled sessions for underachieving pupils and before and after-school activities. There is not enough analysis of the impact of all of these activities. For instance, only at the behest of the inspector did the school check how many pupils eligible for the pupil premium access the opportunities offered to them, came in early for breakfast or stayed on for after-school clubs. As it happens, the analysis is very positive and goes a long way towards explaining why pupils supported through the pupil premium are achieving much better now than previously.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors are perceptive and supportive. They recognise how much teamwork among staff has improved. They have recognised the problems the school has faced in recent years and that decisions made by them before the appointment of the current headteacher may have been unwise. Nevertheless, governance has allowed a situation to arise where all staff are on enhanced pay scales in a school that requires improvement and this does not represent value for money. The governing body is not monitoring the effectiveness of the use of the pupil premium closely enough. The governing body is very careful to monitor health and safety issues and to ensure the safeguarding of children. Individual members take on many specific roles that help to ensure that this is a safe and happy school with a friendly ethos. They fully recognise that what is urgently needed is a rapid improvement in pupils' achievement.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119380
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401838

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Fred Heyworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandra Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 337321
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