

St Barnabas CE VC Primary School

Albany Road, Montpelier, Bristol, BS6 5LQ

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- An extremely strong sense of community is central to the caring ethos within St Barnabas. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their learning are good. They feel very safe and demonstrate a high level of respect for the staff and each other.
- The school has coped exceptionally well during a period of change last year. It has maintained good standards in all aspects of its performance. The acting headteacher has played a vital role during this period.
- The governing body is fully involved in supporting and challenging the school and plays a fundamental role in maintaining and improving standards within the school.
- Teaching is good overall and all groups of pupils achieve well in both their academic and personal development. By Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with national averages.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly and make good progress because staff are skilled at ensuring the pupils are happy and well cared for. They enjoy an excellent balance of work and play activities.
- Virtually all parents and carers are pleased that their children attend St Barnabas. They fully trust that the changes and decisions that are made are firmly in the interests of their children. The pupils are also very proud of their school.
- The curriculum is wide and exciting. It focuses closely on the pupils' interests and backgrounds, and provides outstanding links with both the local community and the wider world.
- The monitoring of the progress and needs of individual pupils and groups is very accurate and, as a result, the quality of teaching is continuing to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not always challenge some of the higher-attaining pupils enough and not enough teaching is outstanding.
- The senior leadership team needs strengthening in order to support the acting headteacher and ensure continued school improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out over two days with half a day's notice.
- The inspectors observed all the staff teaching a total of 19 lessons. This included a joint observation with the acting headteacher.
- The inspection team heard pupils from Years 1 and 2 read individually and observed guided reading lessons and sessions on the teaching of phonics (pupils learning letter patterns and the sounds they represent).
- Meetings were held with the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, members of the governing body, pupils, subject leaders and the school improvement officer.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour, both inside and outside of the classroom, and scrutinised the school's safeguarding procedures.
- The 17 responses to the online Parent View survey were taken into account. Parents and carers were met informally at the beginning and end of the school day, and inspectors took into account the school's own survey. The views expressed in the staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of evidence including: the school's data for tracking pupils' progress, the school's checks on how well it is doing, performance management documentation, monitoring reports, the school's action plan and the work pupils were completing in their books.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Juliet Jaggs

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Barnabas is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school located in the centre of Bristol.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a single year group in the Reception class. Older pupils are taught in single-year groups in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6. Years 2 and 3 have two mixed-age classes.
- The great majority of pupils (89%) come from minority ethnic groups and a large percentage of pupils (55%) throughout the school speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding for children in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals (about 63%), is significantly above the national average.
- The proportions of pupils who have special educational needs supported at school action and school action plus or with statements of special educational needs are similar to the national average.
- The school has met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, over the last four years.
- The school runs a breakfast club on the school site.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to the staffing structure.
- The previous headteacher retired in 2012. The acting headteacher was appointed to her post in May 2012.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching so that more lessons are outstanding by:
 - agreeing what constitutes an outstanding lesson, and sharing and celebrating best practice
 - ensuring that all pupils receive effective feedback about their learning in all subjects
 - increasing the level of challenge in all lessons to stretch the higher-attaining pupils further.
- Strengthen the senior leadership team in order to support the headteacher in continuing to drive school improvement.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start at the school in the Reception Year, their knowledge and skills are significantly below the levels generally expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. A significant number of pupils speak English as an additional language. However, the current cohort has higher levels of attainment than previous years.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the majority typically reach levels that would normally be expected when they leave Reception. Literacy and numeracy levels remain slightly weaker than other areas. However, the large gains made by most pupils in emotional and social development are testimony to the focus that St Barnabas has on the 'whole child'.
- Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school and their levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 are broadly in line with national averages in English and mathematics. However, a small gap still exists between the performance in writing when compared to reading and mathematics. While the school has enjoyed some success in closing this gap, pupils continue to do better in reading and mathematics.
- The accurate pupil-tracking data used by the school to monitor performance provide evidence that the vast majority of pupils are making good progress over time. This is especially the case for those who are eligible for the pupil premium and for those who have special educational needs, many of whom are making accelerated progress from their individual starting points. This is secured with well-targeted support and effective interventions delivered by teachers, teaching assistants and support staff, ensuring equality of opportunity for all. Consequently, the gap in the average point score between pupils supported by the pupil premium and other groups nationally is narrowing.
- The pupils enjoy reading at school, which has a positive impact on the good progress pupils are making. Phonics sessions are an integral part of the daily curriculum in Reception and Key Stage 1 and are taught effectively. Recently, the school has placed a strong emphasis on developing literacy skills and this focus is paying dividends.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported very effectively and quickly acquire the language skills that allow them to participate fully in all lessons.
- Skills in information and communication technology, reading, writing and mathematics are developed well in all subjects across the curriculum, supporting the good rates of progress being made by pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teachers' enthusiasm, subject knowledge and knowledge of their pupils results in the great majority of lessons being well planned and engaging for all pupils.
- Teachers ensure that, in most lessons, learning runs at a brisk pace, and they use good questioning skills and awareness to keep all pupils 'on task' and enthused.
- This enthusiasm was particularly evident during a Key Stage 1 English lesson when all of the pupils were very keen to read out excerpts from their individual stories based on a well-known fairy tale to both the visiting inspector and their form teacher.
- Teachers' relationships with pupils are very good. Pupils say that teachers are friendly and approachable. Teachers work effectively with teaching assistants to try and ensure that those pupils requiring extra help receive the support they need in order to make good progress.
- Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to develop their communication and social skills through the consistently effective use of 'talk-partners'. Pupils also work well together in group work. Their willingness to work together collaboratively was observed in a Year 5 literacy lesson when pupils were working in teams to write a presentation explaining the reasons behind the four seasons. This also reflected the cross-curricular approach in much of

the teaching seen, in this instance, combining English with geographical and scientific knowledge.

- The targeted intervention strategies for pupils with learning difficulties have proved to be extremely successful in accelerating the progress of the less able. The introduction of the 'Reading Recovery' scheme and the whole-school focus on reading and literacy skills has had a strong impact on the progress of the less-able pupils.
- In a few lessons, pupils are not given hard enough work. They are allowed to remain as passive learners and therefore do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- The quality of teachers' marking in most subjects is consistently good. The written feedback gives pupils a clear indication of the level of their work and how to improve it.
- In a few lessons, planned activities are not at the right level of difficulty for the different abilities of pupils. In particular, on a few occasions, the learning tasks do not sufficiently challenge the higher-attaining pupils.
- The incidences of disruptive behaviour in lessons are few and far between and are dealt with effectively in most cases by staff who demonstrate effective behaviour management skills.
- All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire or spoke to the inspectors thought that their child was well taught and made good progress at the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- From when they start school, young children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught what is expected regarding good behaviour. They respond very positively and behave well as they learn and play inside and outside of their classroom.
- In Years 1 to 6, behaviour is consistently good. No anti-social behaviour was observed. Pupils know how to behave whether they are in lessons, moving around the school or playing together outside during break times. There have been no exclusions during the current academic year.
- There are clear and detailed systems to record poor behaviour or racist incidents. The school deals with any inappropriate behaviour effectively, although incidents are relatively uncommon.
- Staff and the governing body work hard to ensure that the school is a safe place for pupils to work and play. Discussions with pupils reflected that they feel very safe at school and were confident that the caring staff would always help them out if they had a problem or concern.
- Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in the improving rate of attendance.
- The older pupils interact very positively with the younger age groups and are keen to take on roles of responsibility, such as 'peer mediators'. The good relationships between all ages are a clear strength of St Barnabas, and pupils are very keen to celebrate the achievements of their peers and to 'let everyone's light shine'.
- The atmosphere of mutual respect was confirmed by the responses to the school's own surveys, the staff questionnaires, and the views expressed on Parent View.
- Pupils had a good understanding of the various kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying, but were strongly of the opinion that very little bullying took place.
- The vast majority of lessons have a positive atmosphere and pupils enjoy their learning. They are keen to take a very active role in school life, and the energy and contribution of the school council is a strong example of this.
- The school's breakfast club is well organised and well attended. It provides pupils with a very positive start to their day at school.

The leadership and management are good

- The acting headteacher provides strong and determined leadership. She receives good

support from the governors and senior staff. They share an ambitious vision for the future which is substantiated by the ongoing improvements in many areas. These include an increased accountability for all staff and a strong emphasis on performance management.

- Accurate and honest checks on how well the school is doing have enabled the school's leadership to address successfully a range of improvements in a short period of time. The impact of these actions results in: the establishment of a comprehensive and accurate assessment and tracking system to measure pupils' progress and the improvement in the pace and depth of learning for the great majority of pupils.
- The process of distributing leadership and further developing the role of new subject leaders is taking place but more work needs to be done. Currently, the acting headteacher carries too heavy a load.
- Professional development courses are undertaken to meet, not only the needs of individual teachers, but also the needs of the school as a whole.
- Pupils' progress meetings are held at least termly and any pupils who are falling behind or not making expected progress are identified quickly and appropriate action is taken to support them.
- All staff fully support the acting headteacher's aims for the school and this was strongly reflected in the staff questionnaires. Morale is high and the teachers are committed to providing the best all-round education for pupils.
- Parents and carers are fully involved with their child's education in a wide variety of ways, including family learning projects and the recently introduced 'Open Doors Day'. They are not only kept very well informed by the school's website but also provided with a very detailed and colourful insight into the life of the school.
- There is a united determination throughout the school to ensure equal opportunities, to foster good relationships and to prevent any discrimination. Pupils from many different nationalities and backgrounds get along extremely well with each other.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values, knowledge and understanding is central to all the school does. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to reflect during class and whole-school assemblies. The 'community curriculum' is enriched by a variety of clubs, visits and visitors which assist the pupils' learning and personal development as well as bringing 'learning to life'.

■ **The governance of the school:**

The governors are wholly committed to challenging and supporting St Barnabas. They have been exceptionally supportive of the school's leadership through recent difficult times. Governors actively seek improvements in the school's performance that are sustainable and have a direct impact upon the achievements of pupils. The governors have a clear understanding of the school's finances and how the pupil premium funding is allocated as well as its impact. They also know about performance management and how teachers progress along the salary scale according to pupils' achievement.

They make regular visits to the school and receive regular reports from the headteacher and senior staff. The governing body regularly reviews its practice and effectiveness, and ensures that all governors are professionally trained and developed. Governors make sure that statutory requirements are met and that safeguarding arrangements are rigidly implemented to keep the pupils safe.

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

Unique reference number	109144
Local authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	403079
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Barrie Green
Headteacher	Jilly Pridmore
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2008
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