

# Darwen St Barnabas Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Knowlesley Road, Darwen, Lancashire, BB3 2JA

**Inspection dates** 12–13 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- Achievement varies between classes and progress is not consistently good, especially for the more-able pupils.
- Skills in handwriting and punctuation are not as high as they should be when pupils leave school. Pupils do not apply their numeracy skills effectively to solve problems.
- Teaching is inconsistent and not enough is good. The pace of lessons is not always brisk enough and work is not consistently set at the correct level to get the best out of pupils.
- The curriculum is not balanced well enough to ensure the day is interesting and meets the needs of pupils. Experiences for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are not as rich outdoors as they are indoors.
- Leaders and governors do not use information about pupils' progress to check that all make as much progress as possible and to hold staff to account for the progress of pupils in their class.
- The monitoring of teaching has not eradicated weaker aspects. The role of subject leader is underdeveloped.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils enjoy reading and attainment in this subject is rising.
- Progress is good in some years, especially Year 6, where teaching is consistently good.
- Marking of pupils' work is good and comments tell them how to improve.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe because this is a caring school and relationships between staff and pupils are good.
- Pupils enjoy school and attendance is good.
- Links with parents are close and they are happy with the education provided.
- Clubs and visits add interest to the curriculum.
- Leadership from senior leaders and governors has been strengthened by new appointments and external guidance. There are signs that teaching and achievement are improving and the school is returning steadily to its previous higher performance.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They visited 15 lessons and group sessions, especially when pupils were taught their letters and sounds.
- Discussions were held with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Pupils read to the inspectors.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work with a focus on mathematics and writing in Years 2 and 6.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documents, including the school's improvement plans, the school's evaluation of its performance, tracking information about pupils' progress and documents about safeguarding.
- The views of 20 parents were analysed through the online questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents talked to inspectors at the start of the school day.
- Four responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire were analysed.

## Inspection team

Jennifer Platt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Tracey Fulthorpe

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British and none are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Occasionally, pupils attend the local pupil referral unit, usually on a part-time basis.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- A new deputy headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to be consistently good or better in order to increase the rate of pupils' progress by:
  - ensuring work is set at the correct level for pupils and tasks are always hard enough, especially for the more-able pupils
  - making sure that the pace of lessons is always brisk enough to sustain pupils' enthusiasm for learning
  - providing more practical experiences for pupils in mathematics and increasing their ability to use their skills to solve problems
  - raising expectations of pupils' handwriting and giving closer attention to improving their punctuation skills.
- Improve the curriculum to ensure daily timetables include a balance of experiences and that outdoor activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage are as rich as those indoors.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by:
  - giving more attention to resolving the weaker aspects of teaching and holding teachers more rigorously to account for the progress of pupils in their class
  - checking more closely on pupils' progress and putting in prompt action when a pupil is not making enough progress
  - developing the role of subject leaders so they are clearer about how to improve their subjects.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2012 indicated pupils had not made enough progress in English and mathematics. Data and evidence in pupils' books show this is not the case now, although inconsistencies in progress from year to year remain. Attainment on entry to school is typical for children's age and they leave with standards in English and mathematics that are broadly average. This indicates that achievement requires improvement.
- Currently, more pupils are making the progress expected of them from their individual starting points. In Year 6 there is an increase in pupils exceeding the progress expected of them. As a result, more pupils reach above-average levels, especially in reading and mathematics. However, in other years the more-able pupils do not always make enough progress.
- Information from assessment is not always used effectively to identify underachievement and to ensure pupils move swiftly from one level to another. This is improving as teachers record assessments more accurately but action has not yet raised progress to good. This means the promotion of equal opportunities is not yet fully effective.
- Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement. The use of the outdoors does not always extend children's learning, especially in physical development. Attainment in letters and sounds is as expected for this age. To raise this, the school is delaying children attending the whole-school sessions on teaching letters and sounds where approaches are not meeting their needs. The attention to children's social skills and to encouraging them to be creative in role play and art leads to good progress in these areas.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly in line with expectations in reading and mathematics. Although attainment in writing is closer to average this year, weaker skills in handwriting and punctuation remain.
- To improve reading and writing most classes follow a daily literacy session. This is improving pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds. However, during these long sessions the younger children become restless and if a literacy lesson follows pupils' enthusiasm for writing wanes.
- Reading is improving at a fast rate. Pupils in Year 2 make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle new words. In Year 6 pupils appreciate the new books and read confidently. They use the text well to explain their preferences.
- Mathematics is much improved in Year 6 and the dip last year has been resolved. Brief daily calculation sessions accelerate skills, although not all pupils confidently apply these to solve problems.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the progress expected of them and this increases in Year 6. Occasionally, pupils attend the local pupil referral unit and evidence points to good progress in helping pupils to manage their behaviour.
- There is no difference between the progress of those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and that of other pupils. This includes the pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The numbers are low, especially in Year 6, but overall they make the same progress as other pupils. Their attainment is average in English and mathematics.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving, it requires improvement because lessons have weaker aspects that hamper learning and not enough teaching is good.
- In lessons that require improvement the pace slows as the introduction is too lengthy or pupils have to wait for a turn in a practical activity or a game in mathematics. Teachers do not always provide enough opportunities for solving real-life problems in mathematics.
- The match of work to pupils' ability is not always correct. In some good lessons, when the introduction is too easy for the more-able pupils, they are withdrawn to work independently.

However, this is not always the case and sometimes they are involved for too long in activities that are too easy for them.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children enjoy learning through play. They love taking part in the Barney's Got Talent role-play area. With torches as microphones many skilled singers are emerging. Outdoors is not as stimulating as indoors.
- When teaching is good teachers share their enthusiasm and good subject knowledge. In Year 6 pupils are preparing to perform A Midsummer Night's Dream and they show a thorough understanding of the plot and characters. Activities flow into other subjects, as in the business, enterprise and science project to produce bath products based on the text. Information and communication technology is used well for recording rehearsals.
- The teaching of reading has improved with a more structured approach to teaching letters and sounds. Pupils are taught in small groups and this is generally working well for most pupils, although the methods and timing do not suit all pupils.
- Teaching has enhanced effectively older pupils' skills in writing imaginatively and in different styles. They write interesting letters and reports. Teachers' expectations of handwriting and the promotion of accuracy in the use of punctuation are not always high enough.
- Marking is good and many comments tell pupils how to improve. These include challenging comments making it clear when work is not good enough.

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

- Pupils enjoy school. It is not surprising that attendance is good. In lessons most behave well and give close attention to teachers. They appreciate opportunities to talk to a partner and show respect for the opinions of others. Only when lessons fail to capture their enthusiasm does behaviour start to decline. This is managed well by staff.
- In acts of worship pupils are reflective. Their singing is a delight, mirroring the community spirit in the school. Pupils value the opportunity to help those less fortunate than themselves and raise considerable funds for charities.
- Pupils show a good understanding of different types of bullying. They identify some name-calling and falling out but feel comments are not meant to be hurtful and sort it out between themselves.
- Pupils have a well-developed appreciation of how to keep safe. They say teachers provide them with good information and that it is up to them to recall it and avoid dangers.
- Overall, pupils are polite and friendly. Year 5 pupils quickly made friends with visitors from another school and worked together happily making models.
- Pupils identified little they would improve. One pupil said, 'This is a happy school. It is like home because we are all friends here and it feels welcoming.'

### **The leadership and management requires improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because actions have not been rigorous enough to sustain the strengths identified in the previous inspection. Nevertheless, with the appointment of a new deputy headteacher, support from a school which is deemed a Local Leader of Education, and the local authority, actions are beginning to reap benefits. As a result, the school is in a stronger position to move forward.
- The school has a clear view of what needs attention and, following advice, has implemented a more robust action plan. Actions are now linked closely to outcomes and success can be measured.
- Although the headteacher and deputy headteacher are now a stronger team, the role of subject leaders is underdeveloped. Part of this is the result of the previous team approach to leading subjects. Evaluation showed this approach was ineffective and the school has reverted to subject

leaders. A good plan is in place to raise their profile and increase their skills in monitoring and identifying priorities in their subjects.

- Pupils' progress is tracked well and data identify when pupils do not make enough progress. Support is becoming more effective but has not yet led to these pupils making good progress from their individual starting points.
- Training in assessment has led to teachers having accurate records of individual progress, although this is not always used well when planning lessons. As yet, teachers are not fully held to account for pupils' progress and in some years too much time elapses when pupils do not make good enough progress.
- Teaching is improving because it is monitored regularly and, following joint observations with the local authority, weaknesses are identified more precisely. Support is put in place where needed but, as yet, has not been fully effective and some weaknesses remain.
- Teachers are set targets based on their performance and salary awards are linked to achieving these. This has not always been the case, limiting improvement in teaching.
- The curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage is not as rich outdoors as indoors. Throughout the school the new reading and writing sessions have squeezed out time for other subjects and affected the balance of the curriculum. Nevertheless, pupils identify many other popular activities, with physical education at the top of the list. Music and art are also strong. Visits and visitors also add richness. These activities promote effectively pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils appreciate their role in protecting the environment and conserving energy.
- The local authority has been very supportive, especially in making it clear to leaders that action was needed to ensure the school improves and then in guiding changes.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are determined to avoid making the mistake of not spotting when performance declines. They responded well to the need to be more challenging, with a strategic management group that meets regularly and keeps governors more alert to what is happening. Governors give more attention to data on pupils' progress and ask questions about the effect of change on raising attainment. Links with classes provide governors with an informed view of the quality of teaching. They are aware that in the past some salary rewards were not linked to raising achievement and check that this is not the case now. Governors check that the budget balances and that the pupil premium provides support where it is most needed. They fulfil their statutory duties, including checking that safeguarding meets requirements.

## 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>	119456
<b>Local authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	411822

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	166
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Clive Natrass
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Howarth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 January 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 702996
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