

Accrington Benjamin Hargreaves CE Primary School

Barnfield Street, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 2AQ

Inspection dates	6–7 October 2015
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils told inspectors, 'We have lots of good lessons and sports opportunities.' Consequently, they enjoy school, and their attendance is above average.
- Parents who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke to inspectors expressed positive views, saying their children are happy, well looked after and kept safe.
- The strong commitment of leaders, governors and staff to continually move forward and make the school even better has ensured that teaching is now good and attainment has risen.
- Good teaching and the well-planned curriculum capture pupils' interest, so they work hard and make good progress. The care with which pupils present their work is a real strength.
- The early years provision gives children a good start to their learning.
- All groups of pupils achieve well, including those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged. When pupils leave the school, attainment matches national averages, and more are attaining above this in reading and mathematics
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils feel safe and secure because they are well cared for, particularly those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils acquire traditional British values, become responsible individuals, and respect and appreciate different cultures and religions.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is securely improving but does not yet result in outstanding achievement, and attainment in writing lags behind reading and mathematics.
- A very small minority of parents do not feel well informed about how the school manages some aspects of behaviour.
- The leadership of special educational needs provision is at a very early stage of development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise the quality of teaching to outstanding so that achievement becomes outstanding, particularly for the most-able in writing by:
 - ensuring that the assessment of writing is always accurate and staff set challenging targets, especially for more-able pupils, and ensure that they know how to reach them
 - building on the existing strategies to help pupils talk about, plan and organise their writing
 - providing even more opportunities for all pupils to extend and develop their skills by writing for different purposes and in all subjects.

- Further extend the skills of leaders and managers by:
 - developing the role of the new special educational needs leader and updating special educational needs training for all staff
 - establishing a system to regularly check the effectiveness of extra support
 - broadening the information provided for parents so that they are kept fully up to date about how all aspects of pupil behaviour are managed and so that all parents and pupils understand how the mixed-age classes are organised
 - keeping systematic, detailed records of any behavioural incidents that occur.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are a strong partnership, ably supported by governors, middle leaders and staff. They have a clear focus on improving the school for every pupil and give a high priority to ensuring that they all have an equal opportunity to do well, both academically and socially.
- Leaders accurately evaluate what the school does well and what needs improving. Effective action plans are in place, for example to raise attainment in writing. These plans are beginning to produce results but are still at an early stage of becoming fully successful.
- Since the previous inspection, a rigorous system for checking the quality of teaching has been put in place. Evidence from regular lesson observations, scrutinies of workbooks and analyses of progress information enable leaders to provide appropriate professional development so that staff continually enhance their skills and thus raise pupils' achievement. Staff are held to account for their pupil's progress at half-termly meetings with senior leaders.
- Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the support they need. However, staff have not received recent training and the support given to these pupils is currently not checked to see if it could be even more effective.
- Middle leaders' contribution to school improvement has improved since the previous inspection. They check pupils' learning, support staff well and share their specialist subject knowledge. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has only very recently joined the school and the school is well aware that this aspect of leadership needs time and further development to become fully effective.
- Good leadership in the early years ensures that children make a good, secure and happy start to their learning.
- School leaders make good use of the pupil premium funding to provide additional help and support. This enables disadvantaged pupils to progress as well, and often more quickly than their classmates, and any performance gaps between them and their classmates are rapidly closing.
- Sports funding is used well, and provides a range of activities across the school. More pupils are taking part in sports and physical activities and staff have learned new skills, for example in gymnastics.
- Well-promoted spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has created a harmonious school environment. Pupils mix happily, and inspectors observed trusting and supportive relationships. Pupils acquire traditional values, such as friendship, tolerance and respect, through assemblies, lessons and the good example set by all adults in the school.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in a multicultural society. Representing their classmates in the Pupil Parliament teaches democracy in action and the Pupil Voice lets pupils have their say about matters that concern them. They celebrate festivals of the different religions represented at school, and respect each other's different lifestyles and cultures.
- The well-planned curriculum is suitably adapted so that each pupil can make good progress in all subjects, and gain the mathematical and English skills they need across the curriculum and for the future. Popular clubs and experiences enrich learning, including working with professional sports coaches, and visits to museums and local sites, such as the World War I display in Accrington.
- Most parents feel well-informed through newsletters, messaging, the website and parents' evenings, and leaders and staff are always willing to meet parents. However, a very small minority do not feel well-informed about how mixed-age classes are organised or how the school handles different types of behaviour.
- The local authority provides good support for the school. Leaders and governors have made full use of this to improve provision and develop staff skills.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors bring a valuable range of skills. They know their school and the pupils well because they visit regularly and are fully informed through updates on achievement, progress information and reports from subject leaders. Consequently, they ask pertinent questions, challenge leaders and hold them to account, for example, about what is being done to raise attainment in writing.
 - Governors use a range of information and class progress reports to compare the school's performance with other schools locally and nationally. They check the use of pupil premium funds and know that this is effective because disadvantaged pupils often outperform their classmates and do well in comparison with other pupils nationally.

- They make sure that salary rewards are only given to staff when their pupils learn well, and that staff performance management leads to further professional development to improve both teaching and management skills.
- Governors ensure that sports funding is used to increase pupil participation through the provision of a wide variety of sports activities that pupils enjoy, and to help staff learn new skills to pass on to their pupils.
- Governors make sure all pupils are well-equipped for future life and that the school teaches them traditional values to equip them ready for their future lives in modern British society.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet current statutory requirements. Child protection training is up to date and staff understand their responsibilities in this important area.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Inspection evidence and school records confirm that the quality of teaching is rising, due to leaders' monitoring and professional development provided for staff. Consequently, all pupils progress well and attainment is rising.
- Pupils say their teachers make them work hard, and agree that this is a good thing. Favourite lessons include English, mathematics, art and physical education. They particularly value the thorough way in which their work is marked and their daily response time when they respond to their teachers' written comments that help them improve their work. One pupil commented, 'If you are struggling, you can look back at teachers' comments to help you.'
- Good relationships between pupils and with staff aid learning and good progress. The majority of pupils are keen learners, apply themselves well and concentrate in lessons. Teachers plan their lessons well to ensure that all pupils are given work that gets the best out of them, based on the clear progress information provided by the school's detailed assessment systems.
- Teachers know their subject well and ask open questions that challenge their pupils to think hard, give reasons and explain their answers. This was seen when Year 2 pupils were subtracting from 20 pence, and progressed quickly, identifying the tens digit and working from there.
- Reading and mathematics are taught well, and there have been improvements in reading skills over time. Most pupils are confident writers, but teachers do not always give them every opportunity to write for different purposes.
- Good assessment systems provide lots of information about how well pupils are doing. Staff use this information to plan work, to stretch those who find learning easy or to spot where additional help is needed. However, staff do not always use information about progress in writing accurately to provide challenging targets for the more-able to attain higher.
- Teaching assistants support learning well and contribute effectively to pupil progress, especially for those who find it hard to learn in a whole-class group or who may be vulnerable.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupil's personal development and welfare is good.
- All pupils benefit from good-quality care. Pupils and families who may be vulnerable receive extra support in class or through the school's strong links with external agencies, so these pupils can participate fully and progress as well as their classmates.
- The school is a calm, harmonious place where pupils grow and become increasingly mature and reliable. They enjoy roles of responsibility, as members of the pupil parliament, head boy, head girl or prefects, helping younger pupils.
- Pupils know that they are responsible for their actions and are well aware of the difference between right and wrong. Rewards, such as the 'Spotties' for helping or behaving well at lunchtimes promote good manners and consideration for others.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations such as on the roads or in water.
- Pupils value their education. Attendance is above average, few pupils are persistently absent and this has been the case over time. Any absences are quickly followed up to ensure that all pupils attend regularly and on time.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- School records, previous reports and inspection findings show this is typical over time, and parents and pupils agree. There is no record of any discrimination and exclusion is only used in the most extreme circumstances. All pupils understand how behaviour is managed, and say the warnings and traffic lights system are fair. However, a very small minority of parents say they do not know how the school manages different behaviours.
- Good behaviour and supportive relationships results in learning proceeding smoothly in lessons and outside class. Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning so they work hard and progress well.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say bullying is not an issue, but a very small number of parents told inspectors they disagree. Pupils understand bullying takes different forms such as cyber bullying, and know they must always tell an adult about any sort of bullying. They are confident staff listen to and act on any concerns they have. There is no racism. Records of behaviour incidents are kept, but occasionally lack detail.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- School information and inspection evidence show that attainment is rising and progress is speeding up. All groups of pupils make good progress from starting points below those typical for their age. The proportion of pupils making or exceeding the progress expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics is close to and often above the national figure. When they leave the school, pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education.
- Inspection evidence, school records and the work in pupils' books show that those currently in Year 2 are on course to reach their targets in reading, writing and mathematics, and a small proportion are expected to reach the higher levels of attainment.
- Attainment when pupils leave the school is typically close to national averages in all subjects. In 2015, pupils achieved well above the national average in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Although early in the school year, pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to at least match the previous year's outcomes in all subjects, and more are expected to reach higher levels.
- Over time, pupils have achieved well in mathematics because the subject is taught well. In 2015, pupils in Year 6 progressed rapidly over the year, due to good-quality teaching, and a small number attained Level 6 in mathematics.
- Reading is taught well. The strong focus on improving pupils' skills and enjoyment of reading resulted in a rise in achievement, and progress has accelerated rapidly throughout the school. In 2014 and 2015, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 letters and sounds (phonics) check was above that found nationally. Starting in the early years, pupils practise letters and sounds every day, so they know how to tackle new words. Older pupils put their reading skills to good use across the curriculum.
- Progress in writing is good but attainment lags behind reading and mathematics. Opportunities to use writing skills in other subjects or write for different purposes are often limited. Leaders have rightly identified the need to raise writing attainment by developing more effective ways to help pupils think about, discuss and plan their writing.
- Pupils who find it easier to learn are given additional challenges to extend their ability to think and reason. Those with particular talents such as gymnastics are signposted to external clubs or organisations. Strategies to ensure that more reach the higher levels in writing have yet to make a full impact.
- Staff know their pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs well on an individual basis. Support and help with learning enables these pupils to progress as well as their classmates.
- The few pupils who speak English as an additional language progress in line with their classmates. Bilingual support when needed helps them learn well.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. They make good progress, often progressing faster than their classmates. In 2014 almost half the pupils in Year 6 were disadvantaged, and their attainment was behind their classmates by three terms in reading and writing, and two terms in mathematics. Compared to other pupils nationally, they were three terms behind in reading and writing, and two terms behind in mathematics. Carefully used pupil premium provides well-targeted support, so these gaps are closing rapidly.

Early years provision

is good

- Most children enter the early years with skills just below those typical for their age, particularly in personal development and language. They make good progress from their different starting points and the proportion of children including those who are disadvantaged, who reach a good level of development at the end of their time in reception is above the national average; as a result they are well prepared for further learning in Year 1.
- Children are well cared for, so they quickly feel secure and settle into the routines of school. They behave well, tackle their tasks enthusiastically, know they must be careful when using equipment like scissors and are happy to share and take turns.
- Good teaching provides a carefully planned range of learning opportunities, both indoors and outside. Staff build on children's interest to help them learn well, but do not always intervene if children 'flit' between activities.
- Despite the limited space, children have opportunities to learn outdoors every day. Even when it rained during the inspection, they quickly put on their wet weather clothes and wellies, eager to go and practise letter formation by painting them on the wall with water and counting the number of fish caught in their nets. The teaching assistant skilfully extended their learning by asking how many there would be if they caught two more or one less.
- Children are prepared well for reading and writing through daily stories and learning letters and the sounds they make. Children were excited at the prospect of making their own scarecrow, and the teacher used every opportunity for them to sound the first letter of the scarecrow's clothes and linked this to their homework. One child was thrilled to spot the letters of his name in the class story.
- Staff check progress thoroughly and use the information to plan activities that develop children's skills and provide extra help where needed, although specific activities are not always arranged for more-able children. Each child has a learning journal, which parents are encouraged to contribute to.
- Good leadership is focused on continuing to improve the provision for every child, ensuring that parents are fully involved in their child's learning and ensuring that the characteristics of effective learning are incorporated into each activity.

School details

Unique reference number	119441
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10002234

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body board
Chair	Kathleen Jones
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Julie Nicol
Telephone number	01254 232130
Website	www.benjamin.lancsngfl.ac.uk
Email address	bursar@benjaminhargreaves.lancs.sch.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools. Pupils are taught in six classes, some of which have a mixture of two age groups.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Pakistani pupils form the largest other group. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below the national average, but varies across the school. Pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and those looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and pupils who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupil's attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed lessons in all classes, including one observed jointly with the headteacher and another with the deputy headteacher.
- They examined the school's current achievement information, the methods the school uses to gather an accurate picture of pupil performance and looked at how leaders monitor and check the quality of teaching.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils were inspected.
- Inspectors met with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority and talked with a number of parents.
- The inspection team observed pupils outside at breaktimes and lunchtimes, looked at their workbooks, listened to readers from Years 2, 4 and 6, and visited guided reading sessions.
- Inspectors received a very small number of letters from parents and looked at the 28 responses recorded online in Ofsted's Parent View, and the 23 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Margot D'Arcy

Ofsted Inspector

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