

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



5 May 2017

Mrs Catherine Greenwood
Headteacher
Burnley St Peter's Church of England Primary School
Church Street
Burnley
Lancashire
BB11 2DL

Dear Mrs Greenwood

Short inspection of Burnley St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 25 April 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in January 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and the staff are highly motivated to make a difference to the lives of pupils and families in the local community. You have created a school where morale is high and staff commitment is strong. Positive relationships and a caring ethos ensure that pupils feel safe and happy. This is because staff have a detailed knowledge about families and their children, which enables them to provide the right teaching and care for each pupil. Pupils appreciate the support they receive and told me that the best thing about the school was the teachers.

You and your governors set high expectations for pupils and staff and are ambitious to achieve the very best for the school. As governors commented, 'There is no complacency here and no excuses.' By the time pupils leave school, standards are above average and progress is good.

You make sure that the school's Christian ethos helps pupils develop strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Frequently, the whole school worships together and there are opportunities to reflect on values such as kindness, justice and service. Pupils were proud to explain what they understand about the values they are taught and how they make their school special.

The school has successfully addressed the areas identified for improvement at the last inspection. The recent initiatives focused on improving mathematics skills are

helping to promote consistent practice in teaching. Well-planned and meaningful opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills are helping pupils to reach the higher standards in mathematics. The most able pupils particularly have benefited from the changes. You and the senior team have also strengthened the teaching of reading. Well-trained staff make sure that basic skills in phonics are consolidated from an early age and extra support is provided for those pupils who need it. You have invested in new reading books for the library to encourage pupils to read independently. Some pupils told me that they would like an even wider choice of books.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff training is up to date and there are well-established systems in place to keep pupils safe. Records viewed on inspection showed that where pupils are potentially vulnerable, swift action is taken to protect them from harm.

Pupils are confident that adults in school will help them if they have a problem and will deal with it quickly. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, and are well prepared to deal with any incidents.

You have worked hard to ensure that the attendance of all groups of pupils is good and take steps to improve this if it falls behind. One example includes working with faith leaders in the local community to publicise the importance of attending school regularly. This action has resulted in a significant improvement for one group of pupils and attendance is currently above average.

Inspection findings

- In this inspection, I focused my time on finding out why so few children meet the standards expected for their age by the end of early years. You told me that children start school in Reception with exceptionally low levels of development and skills for their age. In addition, many of the children are unable to speak English. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional skills, develop confidence and learn to become more independent. They acquire a good understanding of language quickly because they are taught letters and the sounds that they make frequently and systematically. However, there is a lot of ground to make up and by the time the children leave the Reception class their attainment is still below average for their age. The early years leader is working hard with the 11 local nursery providers to improve the skills that children have when they start school.
- Second, I investigated whether the pupils who did not achieve as well as they should in the Reception year are able to catch up with their reading, writing and mathematics skills by the end of Year 2. Your insistence on regular and effective teaching of letters and sounds is paying dividends. More pupils are reaching the standard expected of them in phonics by the end of Year 1. You have made sure that pupils have plenty of opportunities to read and to develop their vocabulary so that by the end of Year 2, middle- and high-ability pupils make good progress

in reading. In writing and mathematics, low- and middle-ability pupils have not progressed as quickly as in reading, but they have improved in the last three years. Your own analysis tells you that pupils take longer to acquire confidence in their ability to use the skills they need in these areas. You have taken a deliberate decision to consolidate learning for younger pupils so that they are not moved on too quickly but develop strong foundations.

- Third, I wanted to know why the published data seems to show that pupils do better in key stage 2 than in key stage 1. By the time they leave school, the pupils in Burnley St Peter's make more progress than that made by all pupils nationally especially in writing and mathematics. This is because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding in key stage 2. Crucially, however, it is also because the staff in school rightly concentrate on basic skills in key stage 1. Work in pupils' books and observations of teaching and learning show pupils becoming more confident and accurate with their writing and mathematical skills as they move through school. Pupils who are known to be disadvantaged do especially well and make good progress because of the early and effective support they receive.
- Next, I considered whether the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to make progress in a wide range of subjects. Pupils' work and teachers' plans show that teachers choose interesting topics to excite and enthuse pupils. Subject leaders spoke passionately about what pupils are learning in history, geography and physical education. Other areas of the curriculum are equally well planned. However, information about the progress that pupils are making in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics is limited. Although leaders check work that pupils produce in their books, the school does not routinely assess their progress. Plans to develop this further are at an early stage.
- Finally, I asked questions to find out whether leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. You carefully monitor the quality of teaching and learning and bring about improvement when needed. You regularly gather information about the attainment of individual pupils. Nevertheless, your information management system does not yet provide you with a readily accessible overview of the school's performance or show you how well pupils are doing year on year from their different starting points.
- Before my visit, I looked closely at the school's website. This is a valuable resource for parents and contains very useful information about the school. It is bright and colourful and easy to navigate, though the school's published plans for the use of the pupil premium and sports grant do not give enough detail to show the impact of the school's work.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- assessment systems are developed to enable leaders to have an accurate overview of the progress that pupils make from their different starting points as they move through school

- the leadership of subjects other than English and mathematics is improved so that pupils' progress is monitored and assessed
- the website is checked regularly and the pupil premium plan meets the requirements of information to be published online.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Blackburn, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Lancashire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Parkinson
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I carried out observations of learning in five year groups. Two of these were joint observations with the headteacher. Along with subject leaders, I looked at children's work in books. I scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, minutes of meetings of the governing body, behaviour logs and records connected with the safeguarding of children. I held discussions with members of staff, governors and the local authority representative. I listened to pupils read. I evaluated six responses received through 'Parent View' (Ofsted's online survey) and 13 responses received through the online staff survey. The pupil online survey was not distributed to them.