

St Barnabas Church of England School

St Barnabas Street, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire NN8 3HB

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2017

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	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has an accurate view of the quality of provision. She is unwavering in her approach to school improvement.
- Governors are committed and highly ambitious for the school. They use their varied skills to good effect to both support and challenge leaders.
- The promotion of pupils' personal development and welfare is a strength of the school. Staff are very well trained, so they can provide a wide range of support for pupils. They are innovative in their drive to secure the well-being of pupils, working successfully with pupils and families alike.
- Children get off to a flying start in the Reception classes. The highly effective leader ensures that the well-trained staff provide high-quality experiences, so children make the best possible progress.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan sequences of lessons so that pupils build up their knowledge and understanding systematically. Books show that pupils take pride in their work.
- Occasionally in lessons, teachers do not spot where they can provide pupils with higher levels of challenge quickly enough.
- The curriculum offers a wide range of learning experiences for pupils to broaden their horizons and to successfully promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.
- Procedures to safeguard pupils are effective. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and every parent who expressed a view said their child was well looked after.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well because leaders check their progress and target support carefully. Leaders do not evaluate the progress that groups of pupils make in great depth.
- By the time they reach the end of Year 2, pupils' achievement exceeds that seen nationally for their age. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Some leaders are new to their posts this year. The headteacher has ensured that they are well equipped to take on their roles, but it is too soon for them to have made a difference in their areas of responsibility.
- Attendance is above average overall, but the attendance of some disadvantaged pupils is stubbornly low.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - teachers have the highest expectations, particularly of the most able pupils, providing them with opportunities to excel across a range of subjects
 - leaders evaluate more strategically the progress made by groups of pupils so that they can intervene to make sure that all make the best possible progress.
- Develop the skills of subject leaders so that they are able to improve the quality of teaching and accelerate the progress pupils make in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils by working more creatively with those parents whose children do not attend school regularly enough.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has an accurate view of the work of the school. This allows her to plan for improvements with clarity. She has focused sharply on systematically improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. As a result, since the school converted to become an academy, outcomes for pupils have risen and the standard of education that the school provides is good.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the pupils to do well. She ensures that staff at all levels receive appropriate professional development. The headteacher takes advantage of the support provided by the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust and of the school's membership of Fairfield Teaching School Alliance. Staff appreciate the training they receive, recognising that it enables them to undertake their responsibilities well.
- The headteacher is held in high regard by staff and parents alike. She places a high prominence on promoting the well-being of staff, pupils and families.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers tailor the themes for learning so that they interest the pupils in their class. Teachers make links across the curriculum so that learning makes sense for pupils. For example, in an English lesson, pupils were writing questions they would like to ask Florence Nightingale. A particular feature of the school's curriculum is the focus leaders place on making strong links with the local community. For example, leaders invite parents who are firefighters or paramedics into school to support pupils' understanding of their work. Leaders consider carefully the needs of the pupils. They plan excursions to broaden pupils' experiences, such as a trip to the seaside and to the lifeboat station.
- Leaders make effective use of the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium funding. Staff receive training to improve their teaching of PE. Leaders analyse carefully pupils' participation in sporting activities. They offer a variety of sports and clubs after school to appeal to as many pupils as possible. As a result, there has been an increase in rates of participation over the last year. A sports coach encourages active play at lunchtime.
- Leaders manage the performance of staff well. The headteacher sets aspirational targets for teachers. She regularly checks the quality of teaching to ensure that it is of a high standard, swiftly providing additional support where this is required. Governors are well informed about the performance management procedures.
- Leaders promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This helps pupils to develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on both local and global issues. For example, what they would like to change about their school or the plight of children suffering from the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean. Pupils visit the theatre and can learn to play the recorder. Visits from the local Imam and parents who taught pupils about Shabbat and Hanukkah, for example, enable pupils to learn about religions and cultures that may be different from their own.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional government funding they receive to support disadvantaged pupils to ensure that these pupils can have the same

opportunities as others. Leaders consider individual pupils' barriers to learning and ensure that these pupils receive the support they need.

- The headteacher is also the special educational needs coordinator. She knows this group of pupils well and engages very successfully with external agencies so that support is provided for those pupils who need it. The headteacher reviews the progress pupils make termly to ensure that they are progressing well from their sometimes very low starting points. She is developing the information about provision to ensure that it relates tightly to expenditure, enabling governors to hold her even more closely to account. Parents whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities who spoke with inspectors were complimentary about the bespoke support their children receive.
- Through the school's own values, leaders promote British values well. Pupils learn about democracy as they vote for classmates to represent them as school councillors. They listen respectfully to the views of others that may be different to their own. Pupils understand the school rules and visiting magistrates help pupils learn about the rule of law.
- There have been some changes to the leadership structure of the school over recent months. The leaders with responsibility for English and mathematics took up their posts just a few weeks ago. Other subject leaders have recently taken on new roles. At the time of the inspection, the deputy headteacher was taking maternity leave and the early years leader was the acting deputy headteacher. The headteacher has ensured that transition between leaders has been thorough. Leaders who are new to post have been able to shadow their predecessors and meetings were arranged for outgoing leaders to share information with the new leaders. While it is too early for these leaders to have had an impact in their area of responsibility, they are well placed to begin this work.
- Leaders check the progress that pupils are making regularly during the year. This means they are able to target carefully any additional support that may be required for individuals. While leaders have a clear understanding of the progress pupils make and how well they achieve, they do not all routinely evaluate in depth the progress that groups of pupils make in order to compare the progress of different groups.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective. Governors are very ambitious for the school. They have a good understanding of what the school does well and the current priorities for improvement. This is because they ask challenging questions of the leaders and they spend time in school finding out about provision for themselves.
- Governors are actively engaged with the school. They regularly hold leaders to account. They attend meetings with leaders to evaluate the progress pupils make, for example. This enables them to ask specific questions and understand provision in detail.
- Individual governors bring a wide range of skills and strengths to the board. Their financial expertise, educational experience and in-depth safeguarding knowledge, for example, means that the local governing body is able to support and challenge leaders in equal measure.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all staff receive training so that they know how to recognise potential signs of abuse and how to report a concern, should one arise.
- All the appropriate recruitment checks take place and are well recorded before staff, governors and volunteers start working at the school. The bursar ensures that all the necessary procedures are followed when visitors come to the school.
- The headteacher has ensured that there is a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. Staff share information quickly so that early help and support can be implemented in a timely manner. The headteacher, the school's nurture leader and family support worker provide valuable support for pupils and parents. They call upon the expertise of external professionals when this will benefit pupils.
- Pupils say that they are safe in school. Parents and inspectors agree. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations. They learn about road safety and water safety, for example. They were keen to tell inspectors why it is important to complete a fire practice at school, recognising that staff are making sure pupils would be safe in the case of an emergency. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about how to stay safe when they use modern technology.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers and teaching assistants establish strong and supportive relationships with pupils. This ensures that pupils are willing to ask questions and offer ideas freely, safe in the knowledge that their interactions will be valued.
- The teaching of reading is very effective. Pupils use their phonics skills to work out unfamiliar words. In lessons, teachers develop pupils' inference skills well. As pupils become more fluent they can talk about why they choose particular books, using the information on the back of the book to guide their choice. Leaders have introduced a system to reward pupils for reading regularly at home. This is proving to be successful.
- Teaching assistants skilfully deepen pupils' understanding of the ideas being taught by asking well-chosen questions and giving clear explanations.
- Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to clearly explain new ideas to pupils. They make links with previous learning. Pupils' books show that teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities build up their knowledge and understanding and are making strong progress over time.
- Typically, teachers make the learning intention clear for pupils. Pupils' books show that they usually have higher expectations of the most able pupils. Occasionally, in class, teachers have the same expectations of what all pupils will achieve. This slows the progress of the most able pupils because they are completing tasks that are easy for them.
- Teachers use assessment effectively. They provide pupils with additional support through small-group work when they need further explanations to understand new concepts that are being taught, for example in mathematics. This additional teaching

ensures that pupils can achieve as well as possible when they work in class with their peers.

- A designated teacher provides extra support for disadvantaged pupils. She meets with teachers and leaders to decide which pupils will benefit from additional support. Equally, she provides additional challenge for the most able disadvantaged pupils who might be capable of achieving a higher level of understanding. She closely evaluates the progress the pupils make, ensuring that her interventions are successful.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The culture of the school promotes pupils' welfare. Leaders, including governors, place great importance on the well-being of pupils.
- Leaders have ensured that staff have extensive high-quality training so that they can support pupils' welfare. This includes in bereavement counselling, emotion coaching and developing pupils' social skills. Some of this specialist training is shared with all staff so that staff use a consistent approach to behaviour management with pupils.
- The family support worker and nurture lead liaise regularly with teachers so that pupils who would benefit from 'nurture' sessions can receive them. These sessions allow pupils to explore their feelings and develop ways to manage their responses to situations they find challenging. This ensures that pupils are ready to learn in class. When the sessions end, the nurture leader checks that pupils are engaging successfully. She is on hand daily if pupils wish to speak with her to discuss anything that may be worrying them or any success they want to share.
- Leaders provide support for parents to ensure the well-being of their children. This includes ensuring that they receive support with aspects of parenting, such as behaviour management and making sure that children get the sleep they need.
- Pupils are keen learners. Teachers and teaching assistants encourage pupils to be resilient and to persevere with challenging tasks. This helps them to develop strong attitudes to learning.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when they use the internet. They told inspectors, 'You don't send messages about yourself, because it can go all round the internet.'
- Pupils participate in anti-bullying week. They learn how to manage instances of bullying should they arise. Pupils told inspectors that bullying does not happen at St Barnabas, but if it did, they would help each other and they were confident that an adult would deal with it successfully for them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite. They were keen to share their work with the inspectors. On several occasions, pupils invited inspectors to join in with the learning activities because they

were enjoying them so much.

- Pupils' books are well presented, demonstrating pride in their work. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- On the playground, pupils play together sensibly. They make good use of the equipment that is available, including adventure trails, balls and hoops. Some pupils prefer to sit and chat with friends, eating the fruit that is available for them. At the end of playtime and lunchtime, pupils walk quietly into school, ensuring that lessons start promptly and without fuss.
- Occasionally, a few pupils do not demonstrate self-control. For example, a very few continue to talk when the teacher is talking or, when not directly supervised, run along the school's long corridor.
- Attendance overall in 2016 was above the national average. In 2017 it was in line with the national average. Attendance of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average. While leaders can point to individual circumstances that lead to low attendance, they are not making effective use of the pupil premium funding to improve the attendance of a few pupils whose attendance is stubbornly low.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- By the end of key stage 1 in 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and the proportion achieving the higher standard exceeded those seen nationally for each of reading, writing and mathematics.
- By the end of key stage 1 in 2017, unconfirmed assessment information shows that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and those achieving the higher standard have exceeded the national averages for 2016 in each of reading, writing and mathematics again. Fewer disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard and the higher standard in 2017 than in 2016.
- School assessment information, supported by the evidence inspectors saw in pupils' books from the previous academic year, shows that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their individual starting points.
- Leaders track the progress of individual pupils throughout the school year and provide additional support where it may be required. However, leaders are aware that a more strategic evaluation of the progress that groups of pupils make is required. They will then be able to provide even more sharply targeted support and challenge so that more of these pupils achieve the higher levels of which they may be capable.
- The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check in 2016 exceeded the national average. In 2017, the proportion was even higher, with 90% of pupils achieving this milestone.
- While pupils' books show that they make progress across a range of subjects, not all subject leaders are monitoring the progress that pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The leader with responsibility for the early years is highly aspirational. She is systematic in her approach to improving the provision and outcomes for the children in her care.
- Following her detailed analysis of the strengths and areas that can be improved, the leader ensures that staff receive appropriate training and share their new skills and knowledge across the team. This means that improvements to provision can be implemented. She evaluates the changes to provision so that she can be sure they are successful.
- The leader has rigorous systems to ensure children's smooth start to school life. Staff gather information from the many pre-school settings that children attend and offer home visits so they know as much as possible about the children before they start school. Where appropriate, staff prepare the way for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities so that facilities and arrangements are in place to enable them to start school life confidently from the first day.
- The leader forges strong relationships with parents. She provides information for parents about how well their children are doing in a variety of ways throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to contribute to the assessment of their child's progress through the 'wow' wall.
- At the time of the inspection, children had been in school for less than two weeks and were attending on a part-time basis. Staff have wasted no time in developing positive relationships with children so that they feel safe in school. Staff gently encourage children to try a range of activities.
- Staff are highly skilful at supporting children's learning while knowing when to step back, allowing children to be independent and find things out for themselves.
- Staff ensure that children have a captivating learning environment, rich with experiences that will promote their development in a variety of ways. At this early stage of the term, children already show sustained concentration, staying at one activity for extended periods of time. This is because staff have provided sufficient resources and made the task engaging for them. Staff promote language development very well, encouraging pupils' vocabulary development, for example, while exploring in the sand or painting a picture.
- The outdoor area is very well used. During the inspection, children excitedly dressed up as police officers and cycled round the track. They used the 'telephone' to call for help from other emergency services. Others cheerfully used the musical instruments on offer, encouraged by staff to use the stage that was provided to perform their song, when they were ready to do so.
- Leaders ensure that staff are fully aware of safeguarding arrangements and there are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements. Staff promote children's awareness of safety. One child stopped her tricycle by the 'zebra crossing' on the track, asking the teacher if she wanted to cross. The teacher grasped this opportunity to ask the child about how to cross the road safely, reinforcing the importance of looking left and right.
- While some children enter Reception with skills in line with those typically expected of

their age, most children have skills, knowledge and understanding that are just below and, in a few instances, significantly below that expected of them. By the end of the early years in 2016, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development was in line with that seen nationally. By the end of the academic year in 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development had risen again. Three quarters of children achieved this milestone, with approximately one third exceeding this level of achievement. This indicates very strong progress across the early years. Children are very well prepared to start Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	141230
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10035950

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Greg Cracknell
Headteacher	Sue Campbell
Telephone number	01933 445900
Website	www.st-barnabas.northants.sch.uk
Email address	bursar@stbarnabas.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- In 2014, the school converted to an academy within the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust. The predecessor school had been judged to be inadequate.
- The school is a member of the Fairfield Teaching School Alliance.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. The majority speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. At the time of the inspection, no pupils had an education, health and care plan.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, family support worker, nurture lead and the designated teacher for disadvantaged pupils. They also met with the leaders with responsibility for English, mathematics and the early years.
- Inspectors held discussions with a representative from the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust and a group of four governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils and staff around school and with parents as they brought their children to school. They spoke more formally with a group of six pupils. Inspectors considered the responses from the online staff survey and the 66 responses from the parents' online survey, Parent View. There were no responses to the pupils' survey.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation provided by the school, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information relating to pupils' progress, minutes of governors' meetings, samples of performance management documentation and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils.
- A sample of pupils' books from the previous academic year were examined and inspectors looked at current pupils' work in books in classrooms.
- Inspectors observed 11 lessons or parts of lessons. Inspectors observed pupils during assembly, as they moved around school and during breaktimes.

Inspection team

Di Mullan, lead inspector

Graham Boyd

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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