

Inspection of a good school: Accrington Benjamin Hargreaves Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Barnfield Street, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 2AQ

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy belonging to this happy school community. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), get on well with each other and make lots of friends.

Pupils said that the staff are caring and look after them well. Pupils are confident that if they reported any concerns, including about bullying, staff would listen to them and deal with it properly. This helps them to feel safe.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well and work hard in their lessons to meet leaders' expectations. However, pupils, including children in early years, do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects. This is because leaders and teachers are not clear about what pupils should learn and when content should be taught.

Pupils understand that everyone should be treated with respect, regardless of any differences. They know that the values they learn about in school such as compassion are important. Pupils said that they would try to help anyone who was in need.

Pupils value the range of clubs on offer, including those for cookery, cross-country and tag rugby. Pupils are encouraged to play a positive role in their community by taking on responsibilities such as being a 'pupil parliamentarian' or by fundraising for local charities.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are working on their curriculum to ensure that it is broad, balanced and suitably ambitious. At the moment, this is a work in progress. Some subject curriculums are in the early stages of development, which prevents pupils from achieving as well as they should.

In some subjects, such as mathematics and science, leaders have set out the knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they should learn it. In these subjects, teachers have clear guidance so they know what to teach and when to teach it. This helps them to design learning that builds on pupils' earlier knowledge.

In many other subjects, leaders have not finalised their thinking about what pupils, including children in early years, should know. This hinders teachers from presenting subject content in a sensible order to help pupils deepen their understanding over time. It also prevents leaders from checking what pupils know and remember. In addition, some subject leaders do not check that teachers deliver the curriculums consistently well. This means that teachers do not gain from the support they need to design learning that builds logically on earlier content. Consequently, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in these subjects.

In the Reception class, children are happy and confident. They mix well with each other and learn to take turns with their friends. However, because there is a lack of clarity about what they should be learning, they are not prepared as well as they could be for Year 1.

Leaders understand the importance of pupils learning to read. Older pupils enjoy reading and are enthusiastic about the texts their teachers read to them in class.

Children in the Reception class start to learn sounds and corresponding letters in daily lessons soon after they begin school. Teachers make sure that most of the books that pupils are given to practise their reading are matched to the sounds that they know. This helps pupils to gain confidence in their reading ability. However, some staff, including those who provide extra support to pupils who fall behind in reading, have not benefited from the relevant training that they need to deliver the phonics programme effectively. Consequently, too many pupils are unable to read fluently and confidently by the end of key stage 1.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified early. Teachers deploy a range of approaches to ensure that this group of pupils can access the same curriculum as their classmates. When necessary, teaching assistants provide appropriate support for pupils with SEND. However, the progress made by this group of pupils is hindered by the weaknesses in the planning and delivery of the curriculum.

Throughout the curriculum and in collective worship, leaders provide many opportunities for pupils to foster an understanding of the world beyond their school and local community. Pupils learn about the diversity of society and develop empathy for others. Leaders plan a broad range of trips and visits to enrich pupils' learning.

Pupils behave well and are eager to participate in lessons. The atmosphere in the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils' learning is rarely disturbed by poor behaviour.

Governors are proud to be involved in the school and want what is best for the pupils. However, they have not ensured that they have the information that they need to hold leaders to account effectively for the quality of the curriculum.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that leaders are approachable and that they give consideration to staff workload and well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspector agreed that early reading, computing, geography and history may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff receive regular training so that they can spot the signs that may indicate that a child is suffering from, or at risk of harm.

Leaders know the pupils' families well and understand the types of difficulties they may face. Leaders provide vulnerable children and their families with effective early support to prevent problems escalating.

Through the curriculum and from visitors to school such as the police, pupils have many opportunities to learn about how to keep themselves safe. Pupils also understand some of the features of healthy relationships, such as consent.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Several members of staff who either teach or support phonics and early reading have not received suitable training. In addition, leaders do not check that the early reading curriculum is delivered consistently well by staff. This means that some pupils are not able to read with sufficient fluency and confidence. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the training they need to deliver the phonics curriculum effectively. Leaders should also ensure that the early reading curriculum is being delivered as intended.
- In several subjects, leaders are not clear about important content that pupils need to learn and the order in which this should be taught. This hinders teachers when designing learning for pupils and prevents pupils from achieving well. It also hampers leaders in checking that pupils know and remember the important content of subject curriculums. Leaders should ensure that they finalise their thinking about what pupils should know and remember in these subjects from early years to Year 6. This will enable pupils to deepen their knowledge and develop their understanding of these subjects over time.

- Leaders have not made regular checks on how well the curriculum is being implemented. As a result, they do not have a clear understanding of what is going well and what needs to be improved. Leaders should ensure that effective systems are in place to check the quality of education in all key stages, so that children in early years and pupils across the school achieve as well as they should.
- Members of the governing body are not informed well enough about the quality of the curriculum. This means that they are unable to hold leaders to account as well as they should. Governors should ensure that they have the information that they need to hold leaders to account for the development of the curriculum and for pupils' achievement in the full range of national curriculum subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2015.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 119441 |
| Local authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 10199553 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 158 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Kathleen Jones |
| Headteacher | Julie Nichol |
| Website | www.benjamin.lancsngfl.ac.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 6 and 7 October 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new deputy headteacher and a special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator have been appointed.
- The school does not currently make use of alternative provision.
- The school is voluntary aided and is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other leaders. She also spoke with subject leaders and members of staff. The inspector also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a member of the Diocese of Blackburn.

- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school. She spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, and their behaviour and safety.
- The inspector checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe. She reviewed documentation, checked on attendance information and spoke to leaders, governors, staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. The inspector also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. The inspector also considered aspects of a number of other subjects on the school's curriculum.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers expressed through Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments received via the free-text facility. The inspector also reviewed responses to the Ofsted survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector considered a range of documentation provided by school leaders, including the school development plan, the minutes taken at meetings of the governing body and leaders' self-evaluation document.

Inspection team

Janette Walker, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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