

Inspection of Accrington Benjamin Hargreaves Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

Barnfield Street, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 2AQ

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 May 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils experience an unambitious curriculum that is not taught well. Some subject curriculums are still being constructed by leaders. Leaders do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can and should achieve. They have not taken sufficient actions to ensure that pupils learn all that they should. Consequently, pupils do not achieve well.

Leaders do not safeguard pupils effectively. At times, they do not take swift action in response to concerns about pupils' welfare. Most pupils think that bullying is dealt with well, but their perceptions are too generous. A few pupils experience repeated incidents of bullying. This is because teachers' actions sometimes do not put a stop to the bullying that occurs. Leaders and governors are not alert to, or acting on, any unresolved bullying issues because they lack sufficient oversight in these areas. Despite these weaknesses, pupils still state that they feel safe and happy at school.

Leaders do not have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They have not made sure that clear behaviour systems and routines are in place. Pupils regularly experience low-level disruption to their learning.

Pupils appreciate the residential visits and sports clubs that leaders arrange for them. Older pupils enjoy taking on additional responsibilities around the school, such as helping children in the early years at lunchtime.

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

Leaders have not taken effective action to address the recommended areas for improvement from the last inspection. The same issues remain. Leaders' slow efforts to improve the curriculum have been compounded by turbulence in leadership and staffing. As a result, many subject curriculums are still in the early stages of development. Leaders, including governors, do not have the capacity, expertise or knowledge to improve the quality of education by themselves. They are heavily reliant on the support of the local authority to bring about improvements to the curriculum. Leaders are equally reliant on this support to improve the education on offer in the early years.

In many subjects, and in the early years, leaders have not identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know and when this should be taught. In turn, teachers are ill-equipped to identify what pupils already know or to spot the gaps in their learning. Teachers are also left to their own devices to design suitable learning activities for pupils. Some teachers do not do this well. This leads to pupils experiencing disconnected lessons that do not help them to build securely upon what came before or prepare them for what they will learn next. This prevents pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), from achieving well.

Many leaders do not carry out regular checks on teachers' implementation of the curriculum to establish the impact on what pupils know and remember. Consequently, leaders and governors are not aware of, nor able to rectify, weaknesses in the quality of education. For example, leaders have not dealt with instances where teachers are not covering the national curriculum as they should. Therefore, some pupils do not experience a broad and balanced curriculum.

Pupils learn phonics as soon as they begin school in the Reception Year. Although staff have received some initial training to help them deliver the new phonics programme, many are at the early stages of doing this effectively. Some of the activities that staff design to deliver the phonics programme do not have the desired impact. They do not enable pupils to build up a secure body of phonics knowledge. This impedes how well pupils learn to read. It also prevents pupils who struggle with reading from catching up with their peers.

Teachers are suitably trained to identify pupils with additional needs. Leaders liaise with external partners, where necessary, to ensure that pupils with more complex SEND have their needs assessed and met in a timely manner. However, like their classmates, pupils with SEND do not achieve well due to the weaknesses in the curriculum.

Leaders do not support staff adequately to manage pupils' behaviour. Leaders do not keep a close eye on patterns of behaviour across the school. They have not made their behaviour expectations clear to staff or to pupils. In turn, staff adopt different strategies for dealing with misbehaviour with varying degrees of success. Many of the lessons that inspectors visited were disrupted by low-level misbehaviour. This sometimes occurs when pupils lose focus because lessons do not meet their learning needs. Pupils do not move around the school as sensibly as they should. For example, inspectors observed some pupils rushing through corridors and sliding down handrails, which puts them at risk of injury. Staff do not consistently tackle such incidents when they occur, which means that these risks persist.

The experience of children in the early years mirrors that of pupils elsewhere in the school. Leaders have not designed a suitable curriculum that identifies the crucial knowledge that children need. In turn, children do not build secure foundations of knowledge for future learning. Staff have not established effective classroom routines for children to follow. This means that children do not learn how to conduct themselves well when they begin school. Children experience regular disruptions to their lessons, which prevents them from learning effectively. As a result, many children in the early years are not ready for key stage 1.

Leaders provide some opportunities to foster pupils' personal development. They arrange curriculum trips that extend pupils' learning beyond the classroom. Some leaders have also made sure that people from different cultures and backgrounds are reflected well in some areas of the curriculum. However, this is not the case in other subjects. Additionally, leaders have not given enough thought to how the curriculum will enhance pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. The opportunities that leaders provide for pupils to develop their talents and interests

are limited beyond sport. Pupils develop a basic knowledge of physical health and mental well-being.

Governors do not carry out all of their responsibilities effectively. They do not have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Since the last inspection, they have still not ensured that they collect the information they need to evaluate the impact of leaders' actions. They do not adequately hold leaders to account.

Staff morale is low. Teachers feel that their workload is unrealistic. Although they are keen, staff stated that they have too many responsibilities for which they are not given sufficient opportunity to manage.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Staff know how to identify the signs of potential harm. They often report their concerns to leaders. However, they do not do so in a consistent way. This leads to some reported issues being lost or forgotten. Consequently, staff cannot be assured that leaders have considered or addressed their concerns.

Some staff are not confident in leaders' ability to act on safeguarding concerns. Leaders rarely document their actions in response to concerns about pupils' welfare. This is an issue because, at times, leaders cannot recall certain incidents. Consequently, leaders do not remember whether they have responded to them. Even where leaders can recall their actions to safeguard children and families, these actions are sometimes not appropriate. In some instances, leaders have not made timely referrals to external agencies.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not fulfil their statutory duties to keep pupils safe. At times, they do not adequately evaluate the risks posed to pupils. They do not keep sufficient records when staff raise welfare concerns, nor do they respond as they should. This puts pupils at risk of harm. Leaders and governors must make sure that safeguarding records and procedures are effective so that pupils and their families are kept safe.
- Leaders and governors are overly reliant on external support from the local authority to improve the quality of education in the early years and in many subject curriculums. Much of this work is still in its infancy. Leaders do not have sufficient capacity to continue this improvement work without further external

support. Governors must ensure that urgent action is taken to secure sufficient leadership capacity throughout the school.

- Leaders and governors do not have sufficient oversight of behaviour and bullying at the school. Additionally, leaders have not made their behaviour expectations clear to pupils and to staff. In turn, staff do not deal with misbehaviour consistently well, which results in low-level disruption to learning. Leaders must ensure that staff are well equipped to deal with behavioural issues and improve their oversight of pupils' conduct so that they can take swift action when issues arise.
- Teachers do not teach phonics well. The activities that they choose are not effective in helping pupils to learn new sounds. Consequently, pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. Leaders must ensure that teachers are well equipped to teach phonics effectively so that pupils learn to read as quickly as they should.
- The curriculum is at differing stages of development. In many subjects, and in the early years, leaders have not identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn clearly enough. This hinders teachers in designing suitable sequences of learning to help pupils build their knowledge securely. It also prevents teachers from carrying out effective checks on pupils' learning to help address any gaps or misconceptions. Leaders must clarify their expectations of the knowledge that teachers should teach from the early years onwards, and how best to teach it, so that pupils achieve well across the curriculum.
- Leaders do not conduct regular checks on how well teachers are implementing the curriculum. This means that they do not know what is going well and where there are issues. At times, this leads to some pupils missing out on aspects of the national curriculum, which leaders do not take effective action to address. Leaders must improve the systems that they use to check on the quality of education that pupils receive so that they can address any issues with curriculum implementation.
- Governors do not provide robust levels of challenge and support to leaders. This is because they do not gather the information they need to carry out their duties effectively. This means that governors are not aware of, nor tackling, the extent of weaknesses in the school. Governors must improve their oversight of the school so that they can hold leaders to account and provide sound strategic direction.
- Leaders do not provide for pupils' personal development as well as they could. This means that pupils' opportunities to develop their talents and interests are limited. It also means that they do not develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values. Leaders should review the curriculum, and the wider opportunities on offer, to ensure that pupils receive a broad educational experience.
- Leaders and governors have not considered how they can support staff to manage the demands placed on them. This has led to low staff morale. Leaders should ensure that they appropriately consider staff's workload and engage with staff more effectively.

Leaders and those responsible for governance may not appoint early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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.

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

Unique reference number	119441
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10268101
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	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kathleen Jones
Headteacher	Julie Nicol
Website	http://www.benjamin.lancsngfl.ac.uk/
Date of previous inspection	24 and 25 May 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in June 2017.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and mathematics. They met with subject leaders and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning. The lead inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum, spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with a group of governors. He also spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors also talked to staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about safeguarding and their wider experience of school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors reviewed leaders' policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. They discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. They also checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

David Spruce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Stevens

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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