



# Blackburn St Thomas' Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119355  
**LEA** Blackburn with Darwen  
**Inspection number** 280532  
**Inspection dates** 12 October 2005 to 13 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Stafford Evans

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Newton Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Blackburn
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Lancashire, BB1 1NE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 54706
<b>Number on roll</b>	478	<b>Fax number</b>	01254 694813
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Father Carl Schaeffer
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Carolyn Lord

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 12 October 2005 - 13 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 280532
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Blackburn St Thomas' Primary school is a larger than average sized school. Many pupils come from homes that are economically and socially disadvantaged. The percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is very high. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. Pupils enter school with standards below those expected of children this age.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that provides an adequate standard of education and satisfactory value for money. The inspection judgements match the school's self-evaluation. It is a harmonious place and pupils describe it as 'one big happy family'. The school is improving and has successfully reversed the recent decline in standards. Attainment is broadly in line with the national average by the time pupils leave the school. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Throughout the school, pupils' personal development is good, with a very strong commitment to racial respect. Attendance is satisfactory. The teaching ensures that most pupils' learning is effective as well as enjoyable. However, there are some important weaknesses in the teaching that slows pupils' learning. The good curriculum puts a strong emphasis on creative work that results in outstanding displays of art and design and design and technology. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides good leadership and management. Subject leaders rigorously monitor pupils' academic progress, but have yet to develop a monitoring and evaluation role in relation to the quality of teaching and learning. Governance is satisfactory. Parents hold the school in very high regard, and report that they are very happy with the quality of education and care that their children receive.

not applicable

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching by making lesson introductions shorter, challenging the pupils more and giving them clearer guidance on how to improve.
- Ensure that subject leaders monitor teaching and learning to identify areas for development.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Inspection evidence indicates that standards are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress. The school is working to raise standards in English and mathematics. Standards are currently much lower than they were at the time of the last inspection, but are rising and a modest rise occurred in the test results. Standards in Years 3 and 4 have improved a lot in comparison with previous years. The school analyses effectively the comparative attainment of different groups of pupils, which indicates some underachievement amongst Pakistani heritage pupils in Years 3 to 6, and amongst some higher attaining pupils from all backgrounds. The inspectors agree with the school's analysis. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. Pupils' targets for the standards they should achieve are set at a reasonable level for most pupils, but higher attainers need to be challenged more.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good overall. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good; all children enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their outstanding behaviour in lessons and their enthusiasm for learning. There are good relationships and the school is justifiably proud of the excellent racial harmony amongst its multi-ethnic pupils and staff. Pupils feel safe and secure and know that any form of harassment is dealt with quickly and fairly. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils try hard to adopt healthy lifestyles and know a lot about healthy eating. They know the value of exercise and enjoy the two hours a week of physical education and older pupils enjoy after school sporting activities. The school council provides pupils with good opportunities to have a say in the running of the school. Pupils know their views matter and staff respect and try to act on what they say. Pupils develop the basic skills of literacy and numeracy to a satisfactory level. They learn to work cooperatively and collaboratively and as a team. Consequently, they have a good basis from which to develop further skills for later working life. The attendance of nearly all pupils is at least satisfactory. Despite this, the school's attendance rate is below the national average because a minority of pupils take extended holidays. This adversely affects the progress they make in school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers' lesson plans show clearly what is to be taught and learnt and are shared with pupils at the start of lessons. This helps the teacher and pupils to remain focused on the purpose of the lesson. In some lessons, pupils do not do enough work because the teacher spends too long on the introduction and leaves too little time for pupils to do their work. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods and use computers to help pupils learn. Pupils respond readily to the challenge of the work set and show a willingness to concentrate. However, for some higher attaining pupils the work set is not challenging enough and they make unsatisfactory progress. Most work is matched to what the pupils need to learn except in a small minority of lessons when all pupils are expected to do the same work. Pupils are also not always clear what they need to do next to improve their work and this slows their progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support and make good progress in lessons. Pupils who learn English as an additional language also receive good support and most make good progress. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum designed to ensure that all pupils receive similar experiences. The curriculum is designed well to meet the specific needs of pupils with learning difficulties. The particular strengths are in the arts curriculum and the many opportunities provided for pupils to enrich their learning from visits out and visitors to school. Provision for the Foundation Stage is good. Literacy and numeracy provision is good. The school plans effectively for teaching information and communication technology, which resulted in a recent national award. Teachers implement a well structured programme of personal, social and health education. This has a good influence on the progress pupils make in their personal development. A good range of activities outside lessons enhances pupils' learning. Pupils' participation in these activities has a positive effect on their enthusiasm for school, and helps develop their good social skills and a healthy outlook on life.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of all pupils and treats them with respect. The school is very successful in promoting a high degree of racial and cultural harmony. Child protection procedures are well established. Risk assessments demonstrate a strong commitment to pupils' safety. Pupils say they are well supported and feel able to speak with a member of staff about any worries they may have. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by staff who deal effectively with their problems. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are well supported. Procedures for monitoring academic achievement and personal development are good and the information is used satisfactorily to help pupils towards the next steps in their learning. Children settle quickly as they start in the nursery because of the friendly welcome they receive. This provision is enhanced through good use of bilingual staff.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The overall leadership and management of the school are satisfactory.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership. They ensure that there is a high level of care that puts the pupils at the forefront of school life. This sets a climate in which pupils learn in a harmonious atmosphere of racial tolerance. Everyone at the school is strongly committed to ensuring that all pupils have an equal chance of doing their best.

The school's overall monitoring and evaluation of its performance are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have received a good level of support from the local authority and from this the right priorities for future development are set. This is shown in the good school improvement plan that accurately reflects the school's

strengths and identifies areas for improvement. The school has a good capacity to improve, as evidenced by the recent good improvement in the standards pupils attain.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor teaching and learning satisfactorily and as a result have a sound understanding of their quality and what needs to be done to improve them. Until recently, some teachers have been slow to accept the value of monitoring teaching and learning and this has adversely affected the rate at which improvements could be made.

The subject leaders' role has developed in the areas of action planning and curriculum analysis and they are now ready to extend this to include the monitoring of teaching and learning. The governors satisfactorily fulfil their responsibilities and are active in the life of the school. They have a sound picture of how the school performs, but not of how the quality of provision impacts on standards.

Parents report that the school seeks their views and takes good account of their suggestions and concerns.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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14 October 2005

Dear Children

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you very much for being so friendly and talking to us about all you do in school.

I would like to tell you what we thought about your school. You are right. It is 'just like one happy family' in your school.

All the teachers and adults in the school care a lot for you and try to make sure you do well in your lessons.

The teachers do a good job of providing lots of interesting and exciting things for you to learn.

Your behaviour in lessons is brilliant and you care a lot about each other. You really enjoy school.

You are taught lots of good things. You know about staying safe, keeping fit and eating the right foods to make you healthy.

There are many smashing things about your school, especially the way everyone cares for each other.

To help make sure that everyone can do their best I have asked Mrs Lord to:

make the teaching even better

make sure you know what to do to improve your work to a really good standard

make more time for you to work in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Stafford Evans

Inspector

Annex B