



# Bickerstaffe Voluntary Controlled Church of England School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119381  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280537  
**Inspection dates** 27 April 2006 to 28 April 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Lynne Read

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hall Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Bickerstaffe
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Ormskirk, Lancashire
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01695 722957
<b>Number on roll</b>	57	<b>Fax number</b>	01695 722957
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Paul Wilcox
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 January 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jeanne Hall

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 27 April 2006 - 28 April 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280537
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a smaller than average primary school in the rural community of Bickerstaffe, close to Ormskirk. All pupils are of white British backgrounds and the percentage claiming free school meals is below average. When they enter the Reception class, children's attainment is usually average. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, but an above average number of them have statements of special educational need. A privately run, not-for-profit, pre-school operates in the premises every day for two to four year-olds and there are also facilities for after-school care. Staff and pupils are currently working towards the Healthy and Eco schools awards. At the time of the inspection, both the headteacher and senior manager had been in post for less than one year.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school judges itself as effective and inspection findings agree. Value for money is satisfactory. The leadership of the new headteacher is good. She has developed a strong team approach and is the driving force for improving the school. Well supported by the senior manager, she is successfully implementing well-laid plans to raise standards. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall with some good progress emerging in Years 3 to 6, due to improvements in assessment and teaching. Standards in the present Year 6 are average but those for subsequent years are predicted to be above average if pupils continue to learn as well as they do now. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, the higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged to the full. Strengths of the school include pupils' personal development, good standards of care, and good support for those with learning difficulties. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and well enriched by visitors and visits. Children in the Reception group make satisfactory progress but activities do not always consolidate their learning effectively. Throughout school, skills in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and are satisfactory but they are not used sufficiently in other subject lessons. The school has very strong links with the church and community and these support pupils' learning well.

Improvements since the previous inspection are good. Much has been done this year to improve progress in Years 3 to 6. These successes, together with the school's accurate self-evaluation, show that there is good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

In order to continue to improve standards, the school should:

- improve the type, range and choice of activities in the Reception class to allow children to practise and improve the skills they learn
- provide consistently good challenge for the more able pupils, especially in Key Stage 1
- develop the use of ICT across other subjects.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are in line with the national averages. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall and progress is improving in Key Stage 2 where pupils are now meeting the challenging targets set for them because of improved assessment of learning and higher expectations. So while past results and current records show average standards and achievement for the Year 6 pupils, the school's records show predictions of above average standards by the end of Year 6 for the current Year 5 and 4 pupils. Inspection findings agree, providing that the improved levels of challenge are maintained.

Results in 2005 for Year 2 were below average because there was a high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This year, pupils' standards are average, and progress and achievement are satisfactory overall. Expectations are not as high as in Key Stage 2 and the more able pupils are not always challenged fully. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress and benefit from sharing class discussions with the older pupils. However, the independent activities do not provide enough opportunity for them to practise what they learn in group sessions.

Pupils with learning or emotional difficulties and/or disabilities progress well throughout school. The more capable Key Stage 2 pupils are given challenging work to extend their talents. Boys and girls learn equally well in lessons.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and a strength of the school. Pupils are polite, courteous and very proud of their school. Behaviour is very good and pupils confirm that they feel safe and happy. They are keen to succeed and work hard. Attendance is above average. Pupils with emotional difficulties are well supported and cope effectively with the academic and social aspects of school life. Relationships are very good and pupils respond positively to the care shown by their teachers. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is promoted very well. Many opportunities for collaborative work and play help to develop social skills. Pupils clearly know wrong from right and good actions are constantly encouraged and rewarded.

Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. There are good links with the church and pupils learn to care for the environment; both factors promote a strong sense of spirituality. Preparation for the world of work and an understanding of economic well-being are enhanced through many opportunities to help with the smooth running of the school, in decision-making through the school council and fund raising activities for charities.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good in Key Stage 2 where work builds accurately on previous learning, and practical sessions provide excellent opportunities for pupils to develop skills of investigation and independent learning. Throughout school, praise and encouragement inspire pupils to work hard.

In the Reception class, children acquire new skills in the adult-led sessions but the independent activities planned for them do not provide enough opportunity for them to practise and enhance this learning.

Teachers generally have a good understanding of pupils' progress and attainment. Lesson planning takes good account of the various ages in each class. Improved

assessment and expectations in Key Stage 2 underpin the good learning now evident and pupils with higher capabilities are well challenged. However, this is not always the case in Key Stage 1. Pupils too often have to complete more basic work before moving on to extension tasks. This reduces their pace of learning since challenge is only introduced in the last part of the lesson. Throughout school, pupils who are known to find learning hard are given good support, often from well-deployed teaching assistants, so that they do well.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall with good enrichment and good provision for pupils who have learning difficulties. The Reception class planning covers all the recommended areas of learning but activities are not sufficiently linked to the learning themes of the taught sessions. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in English and mathematics. However, planning does not include enough opportunities for pupils to consolidate what they learn in ICT lessons. In Key Stage 2, lessons place a good emphasis on exploring and investigating, especially in subjects such as science or design and technology. Topics for study are carefully planned to ensure that no work is repeated.

Pupils develop confidence and good communication skills through the many opportunities for collaborative working, which supports their personal development very well. The good enrichment programme includes visits, visitors and out-of-school activities. It enables pupils to develop talents and interests, especially in the performing arts, physical activities and sport.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. The school provides good care and protection for its pupils, which enables them to be safe, happy and confident learners. Staff and governors have a great deal of expertise in health and safety matters which is reflected in the day-to-day routines and attention to detail when eliminating risk factors. Parents strongly endorse and appreciate the standard of care at the school. Pupils trust their teachers and this underpins the good relationships. The contract of behaviour is a key feature in promoting good personal development. It has been developed by pupils, parents and teachers working together and so is 'owned' and well regarded by all.

The marking system clearly shows pupils where they need to improve their work and they receive good oral feedback as to how well they are doing. Individual targets provide useful goals for achievement. Pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties have sensitive but firm support in coping with the conventions of school life.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory, with strengths in leadership. The school has undergone recent significant improvement under the good leadership of the new headteacher. Outcomes include improved monitoring of provision and strong teamwork based on a shared vision of raising standards. The school knows its strengths and areas for development well. As a result, staff have a clear idea of what needs to be done and a detailed plan showing how it will be achieved. Planned actions are well chosen and despite standards remaining average in Year 6, they are having a beneficial effect on Key Stage 2 pupils' progress. Leadership and management are successful in maintaining a high standard of care and promoting good personal development in the pupils. All pupils have equal access to all that the school offers.

Management is satisfactory. A new management structure has been devised to allow better delegation of responsibilities and to extend the role of subject managers in checking teaching and learning across all subjects.

The learning environment is very stimulating, administration is highly effective and standards of maintenance and cleanliness are high. These factors reflect a shared sense of pride among all at the school.

The governors understand the strengths of the school well and know where further action is needed. They contribute actively in managing the school and in evaluating its performance; their governance is good and enhanced through the partnership with the new headteacher. All statutory requirements are met.

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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	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	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>	3	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	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	2	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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Bickerstaffe Voluntary Controlled Church of England School

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28 April 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I recently visited your school. The conversations that I had with groups and individuals were very interesting and I thoroughly enjoyed my time at your school.

There are lots of things that I think are good at Bickerstaffe. Some of them are:

you behave very well and are polite and friendly

you work hard and enjoy your lessons

your writing and ICT work have improved

you contribute to some very interesting displays of work around school

your teachers take good care to keep you happy and healthy

you contribute well to the running of the school through the many jobs you do and help to make decisions through your council members.

I know that your teachers and governors work hard and have lots of plans to improve your school. I have suggested that they might look at some other things as well. These are:

providing more opportunities for you to use computers in lessons and for research

improving some of the activities for the children in the Reception class

providing harder work for those pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, who are faster learners.

Thank you once again for helping us so much with the inspection. I hope that you will continue to make Bickerstaffe a friendly and super place to be.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Read

(Lead inspector)