



Saint Barnabas Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103412
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286651
Inspection dates 14–15 December 2006
Reporting inspector Gerald Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Spring Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	3–11		B24 9BY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4645813
Number on roll (school)	239	Fax number	0121 4645814
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Sue Ordidge
		Headteacher	Michael Le-Worthy
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils are from many different ethnic groups. A small number are at the very early stages of learning English. Most children enter the school with skills and experiences that are at the levels expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. The school has made several recent appointments to the management team.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Barnabas is a good school. Achievement is good and when pupils leave at the end of Year 6 standards are above the national average. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They really enjoy school and they thrive in its happy atmosphere. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to be healthy and put this into practice in their choice of food and through taking frequent exercise. They talk proudly about the role of the school council and the responsibilities they take on, which are developing their exceptionally good sense of how they can contribute to the community.

The school's good leadership and management have been strengthened by recent appointments. This has increased the rate at which improvements are being secured. Shortcomings in teaching have been quickly and effectively resolved through robust action and teaching and learning are now good. Classes are orderly and relationships are positive. As a result, pupils' behaviour is good and they are keen to learn. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when pupils who have finished work are not clear about what to do next.

Good teaching, concentrating particularly on developing early literacy and social skills, enables children to make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. This good start is successfully built on in Years 1 to 6, and pupils make good progress in mathematics and science. Progress in English is also good, especially in reading. It is not as rapid in writing because pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn to use punctuation accurately and to broaden their vocabulary when they write.

The curriculum is good and promotes pupils' personal development through activities such as well attended sports clubs and regular visits to places of interest. Pupils talk with real enthusiasm about the good opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) in their learning.

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents are very happy with the quality of pastoral care the school provides. Typically they say, 'The teachers are approachable and supportive and my child is very happy at school'. Challenging academic targets are set for pupils and the procedures to check their progress towards meeting these are good. The guidance and support given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are good, ensuring that they make good progress in relation to their individual targets. The few pupils at the early stages of learning English benefit from well targeted support. This enables them to fully take part in lessons and make good progress in their acquisition of English.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve opportunities for pupils to use a range of punctuation and expand their vocabulary in written work.
- Sharpen teachers' planning to make sure pupils always work hard and are clear about the next steps in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that children make good progress, especially in their speaking, listening and personal development. Most children reach the expected standards by the time they start Year 1 and a few exceed them. Good progress continues in Years 1 to 6. As a result, standards are above average by the time pupils leave school and achievement is good for all groups, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and pupils at the early stages of learning English. Pupils' performance in the 2006 national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 was above the national average.

In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of number and they can use this knowledge well to solve problems. Good practical and observational skills are the foundation of the above average standards in science. While standards in English are also above average, pupils' skills in reading are better than those in writing. Pupils read a wide variety of texts fluently and have a very clear grasp of their meaning. When writing, pupils' spelling and handwriting are of a good standard but their use of vocabulary to develop and 'add colour' to their work and the accuracy of punctuation are weaker elements. The school recognises this and has recently made changes to the English curriculum to improve pupils' use of vocabulary and punctuation. Already there are clear signs of improvement in the written work of pupils in Year 6, but it is too early to judge the success of these plans in other years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's Christian environment underpins pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils respect and value each other and the world around them. Pupils are very polite to each other and to adults. Their good behaviour comes from a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils have a good understanding of other religions and mix together happily. This is contributing to their well formed appreciation of their place in a multicultural society.

Pupils feel safe and secure and report that the very rare incidences of bullying are effectively resolved. They are confident that they can approach a member of staff if they have a worry, knowing their concerns will be quickly dealt with. Pupils are exceptionally clear about the pitfalls of a poor diet and are very careful to eat healthy foods at home, as well as at school. They readily take part in activities such as dance and sport to keep fit. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and are particularly enthusiastic about the good range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer and tackling problems in mathematics lessons. Pupils show exceptional community spirit by collecting for charity, helping others and taking on responsibilities such as being 'playground buddies'. Above average literacy, numeracy and ICT skills ensure good preparation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have good subject knowledge, provide clear explanations and make lessons interesting. They utilise ICT resources well to engage pupils. As a result, pupils are eager to learn and work hard. Discussions are very lively and accelerate pupils' progress through challenging questions. Good opportunities are also provided for pupils to clarify and extend their ideas with their 'talk partners'. Occasionally, pupils are not fully stretched and a bit of time is wasted in lessons when teachers do not provide new activities for those who have finished a task. Teaching assistants are well informed and ensure that pupils who are at the early stages of learning English can participate fully in lessons. They are also well deployed to provide support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well. The good Nursery and Reception curriculum provides an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-led activities. Circle time is used well to support children's personal development. Throughout the school, provision for physical development is good. Swimming, popular sports clubs and physical education lessons support pupils' very good efforts to keep fit. Regular visits to places of interest, such as museums, broaden pupils' horizons and raise their aspirations. Pupils' mathematical skills have been improved through providing more practice in solving problems. However, not enough opportunity is provided for pupils to improve their range of vocabulary and punctuation in written work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Sensitive support and care are provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. This enables these pupils to participate fully in lessons and make good progress. The pupils at the early stages of learning English integrate well into lessons because of the good support provided by teachers and classroom assistants. This support extends to parents so that they can help their children practise spoken English. The school is making effective use of its learning mentor, external agencies and specialists to promote the welfare of individual children when the need arises. Child protection procedures and health and safety checks are robust. The school is using effective measures, such as rewards, to maintain above average attendance.

Pupils are set challenging targets. The procedures to check pupils' progress are generally good. Pupils who are not making sufficient progress are given extra help through booster classes and this is effective in helping them to make up lost ground.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides clear leadership which ensures that pupils make good gains in their academic and personal development. He is well supported by senior managers and other staff who have high expectations for pupils and strive to do their very best for them. The school's accurate view of its strengths and areas for development stems from the systematic checking of its performance by senior managers and subject leaders. Weaknesses have been tackled well. The measures to improve teaching and ensure that lessons are consistently good have been very effective in promoting good progress. When the school recognised that standards in ICT were too low, well judged action was taken to enhance pupils' access to computers and software. As a result, standards in ICT are now above average. This enables pupils to use computers well to support their learning in subjects such as English.

The governing body provides the headteacher with good support. Through their developing understanding of data, governors are asking searching questions about standards and the progress of pupils. The record of improvements since the last inspection and clear strategic planning that is identifying the right priorities show that the school has a good capacity to get even better.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly. You clearly enjoy being in a school where you get on with each other very well. We enjoyed our conversations with you about your work and the other things that you do at school. The school provides you with a good education.

Here are some of the 'highlights'

- The teaching you receive is good and you work hard in your lessons.
- Your behaviour is good.
- You have a very strong commitment to being healthy.
- You really value your school community.
- You have a very interesting range of clubs which most of you attend.
- All the staff care for you very well.
- You make good progress in each year group and when you leave for secondary school your standards of work are above average.
- Your school is well managed.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Improve your written work by making sure you have more practice at punctuation and extend the range of vocabulary that you use.
- Make sure you know what to do next when you have finished a piece of work.

Best wishes for your future and the future of the school.