

Warrington St Barnabas CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111299
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	288916
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	224
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Shearer
Headteacher	Mrs Penny Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2001
School address	Collin Street Warrington Cheshire WA5 1TG
Telephone number	01925 633606
Fax number	01925 241264

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized Church of England school is situated in central Warrington. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the national Healthy Schools' Award, Artsmark, Activemark and the ECO Silver Award. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds reflects the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school has many outstanding features, provides a good quality of education and gives good value for money.

The very capable headteacher has successfully united staff and governors in her vision for taking the school forward. She has guided the development of a revised management structure, based on three focus groups which include staff at all levels. Each group has a remit to assure quality in an important aspect of the school's provision. The structure is underpinned by rigorous assessment and detailed analysis of performance by the headteacher and by the skills and commitment of the staff. The headteacher sets the standard and plays the lead role in monitoring and evaluation and staff have begun to share these tasks with her. This gives them an improved overview of quality and an enhanced awareness of management issues. This inclusive approach has had an invigorating effect and has enabled the school to begin to deal with a major challenge around lower achievement in English, which it has been struggling with for several years. The school has also been able to sustain high achievement in mathematics, science and in pupils' personal development, as a result of good teaching throughout the school.

An energetic fund-raising programme, strongly supported by parents, has enabled the school to complete the first phase of building refurbishments, including improvements to the Foundation Stage accommodation. This has led to improved quality of provision for the youngest pupils, the majority of whom enter Nursery with a low skills base. The progress of pupils in the Foundation Stage has improved this year, particularly their' personal, social and emotional development.

Standards in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 have been above average for several years, representing a significant long-term achievement for the school. The school is tackling lower attainment in English in Key Stages 1 and 2 through a range of strategies to improve pupils' reading and writing skills. In Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in reading and writing at the end of year 2 has risen to nationally expected levels this year, although overall attainment remains below average. This indicates that more work remains to be done. Higher-level attainment in mathematics has also risen significantly. In Key Stage 2, the school's tracking indicates that pupils across the year groups are starting to make more rapid progress in English, but this is not fully evident in national test results.

An impressive range of quality marks attests to the school's effective support for pupils' personal development and the good care it provides for them. There is a strong community ethos and parents and pupils have a genuine pride in the school. The school has been successful in promoting improved attendance and this has now reached a satisfactory level. The quality of care is extremely good. Parents value this and appreciate the school's welcoming approach. A recent course for grandparents was particularly highly rated and is a good example of how the school 'goes the extra mile' to reach out into its community.

Some recently introduced initiatives are at too early a stage to have made a measurable impact on achievement and standards, including some improvements to the English curriculum and the introduction of detailed individual targets for mathematics and English. Work also remains to be done to achieve a consistent approach to marking, in order to provide pupils with good quality guidance on how to improve their work.

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection. Its capacity to make further improvements is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English across the school.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking and academic guidance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is below expected levels for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, particularly in mathematical skills and in the positive attitudes to learning that they develop. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average in mathematics, although overall attainment in English is below average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level at the end of Year 2 has risen in 2007 and now corresponds to the national average in all subjects. Pupils progress well in Key Stage 2. In 2006, attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 was above average, while attainment in science was well above national standards. Attainment in English was broadly average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well in relation to their starting points because of good provision to meet their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they relate very well to each other and to the adults in school. They feel secure and happy in a school where, in their words, 'everyone looks out for each other'. Good collaboration in learning activities is fostered throughout the school. The school council and the healthy schools team are influential representatives of the pupil voice in decision making. Pupils of all ages have a very good understanding of the Healthy Schools agenda; their involvement in sporting activities after school is impressive and they make informed healthy eating choices at lunchtimes. Their understanding of how to keep safe is also developed well through initiatives like the current bike safety project. Pupils readily take responsibility for example when they act as monitors. They lead fund-raising drives for charitable causes and help to organise special events, like the recent anti-bullying day. This, together with the development of their basic skills, helps prepare them well for the future. The school promotes clear moral values, set in the context of its mission statement and pupils' spiritual development is fostered well. Cultural diversity is celebrated through the curriculum, in assemblies, and through classroom display and pupils are prepared well for life in a multicultural society. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now broadly average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good, providing realistic challenge for all groups of pupils through a wide range of activities and experiences. Relationships are good and pupils concentrate and behave very well in lessons. They readily offer their own ideas and show good levels of independence, curiosity and imagination. These positive attitudes are established in the Foundation Stage and are sustained well throughout the years that follow. Assessment of progress is thorough and the information gained is used effectively to guide planning. The school provides an interesting and welcoming learning environment, both indoors and outside

the classroom. Teachers work in productive partnership with teaching assistants. They make good use of resources to support learning. As a result, pupils make good progress in most of their learning and achieve well in relation to their abilities and starting points. The school's strategies to promote improved progress in English have not had time to have a significant impact.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The rich curriculum in the Foundation Stage meets pupils' needs well, with an improved outdoor area adding further exciting opportunities for learning through exploration and investigation. In Key Stage 1, improvements in the English and mathematics curriculum have helped raise achievement, particularly for the most able children, enabling more of them to reach the higher level in national tests at the end of Year 2. The school's recent curriculum review has improved links between subjects to help make lessons interesting and engaging for the pupils and this is reflected in their good personal development. The school has also introduced a range of new strategies aimed at improving pupils' rate of progress in literacy and they are given opportunities to practise their literacy skills in other subject areas. A positive effect of this can be seen in the real enthusiasm for learning shown by pupils. It is too early, however, for the full impact of these initiatives to be measured in national test scores, although the school's internal assessments are already showing improved results. A valuable programme of visits, including several residential trips, enriches the curriculum. Pupils also take full advantage of the very good range of extra-curricular activities provided, including instrumental tuition and the school choir.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents strongly agree that the school provides excellent care for their children. They feel they are well informed and consulted by the headteacher and her staff, who 'always have time to listen to you and are really helpful'. Induction to the Nursery class is sensitively managed and older pupils feel confident about moving on to high school. Systems to protect and safeguard pupils are in place. Pupils with additional learning or emotional needs are identified early and supported well through well-founded individual plans, effective intervention strategies and through the school's very good links with external support agencies. All of these enable them to make good progress. The school tracks pupils' progress carefully but it is too early to measure the impact of recently introduced individual learning targets in English and mathematics. The quality of marking is variable and the advice given to pupils on how to improve their work is not consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher gives very strong leadership. She has created a broad management structure, successfully bringing staff at all levels into planning, decision making and assuring the quality of all aspects of the school's provision. The school development plan is the product of detailed consultation with staff, pupils, parents and governors, all of whom identify strongly with the drive for improvement. Rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluation are helping the school to identify areas for development accurately and to plan appropriate actions for

improvement. Senior staff play an important role: they are becoming increasingly confident and effective leaders and managers, as a result of the experience they are gaining as focus group leaders. The school is beginning to recognise the positive impact of the work of the focus groups on pupils' attainment, for example, in the increased proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in Key Stage 1 in 2007. Governors are well informed about the school's performance and are actively involved in its daily life. They are able to hold the school to account and they carry out their responsibilities conscientiously.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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.

Annex A

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you're all getting along with your learning. We found that your school is giving you a good education and that everyone is working very hard to make the school even better.

We were impressed by many of the things we found in your school. We think you achieve very well in maths and even better in science. Keep up the good work! We were delighted to see the improvements that have been made in the Foundation Stage. It was good to see how the children there are enjoying their learning in the new outdoor area. It's helping them to get off to a good start! We think that your behaviour is very good and we were pleased to see how well you all work in class and how well everyone gets on with each other at St Barnabas School. Congratulations on your Healthy Schools Award! It was well deserved and we hope that the bike safety project goes well.

We've asked Mrs Johnson and the staff to improve some things and they've already started to do some work on them:

- To help you all to reach higher standards in English.
- To improve the way your work is marked, so that the same good system is used in all the classes and so that you can see clearly what you need to do to make your work even better.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by being happy learners.

With our very best wishes to you all.