



Bamber Bridge St Aidan's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119380
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291403
Inspection dates 16–17 November 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Onyon

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Larch Grove
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bamber Bridge, Preston
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire, PR5 6GX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 337321
Number on roll (school)	158	Fax number	01772 620804
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Heyworth
		Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Richards
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. The area it serves is socially and economically similar to the national picture. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A bigger than average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. Attainment on entry to the school is below expected levels. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. More pupils than usual join the school during Key Stage 2. The school has the Basic Skills Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that this is a satisfactory school with good features. It gives satisfactory value for money. Parents are pleased that their children are happy and grow in confidence during their time in the school. As one parent said, "The children are well behaved, proud and smart. My daughter regards school as a happy place." The quality of pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and, in response to the staff's good care and high expectations of their attitude to learning, they approach their work and play with real enthusiasm. The staff's sensitive interpretation of the school's Christian mission also provides good spiritual, moral and social development for pupils.

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Good provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that pupils make a good start. Their progress is good and the majority reach the expected early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and results over the last few years have been consistently above average. Progress slows in Key Stage 2 and is satisfactory overall because not enough pupils reach the higher levels. The school's results in national tests for 11 year olds showed a dip in 2005, but the school's data shows that results are better in 2006, being slightly above average overall, with better results in mathematics than English and science.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There are strengths, but these are not consistent throughout the school. The pace of learning is too slow in some lessons, reducing opportunities for learning. Other aspects of teaching are stronger. A positive feature of many lessons is the quality of relationships and the excellent behaviour of pupils, which lead to positive attitudes and confident pupils. Teaching and learning is best in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and for the oldest pupils. Here, teachers use assessment effectively; match activities to the needs of pupils; and provide opportunities for pupils to make decisions about their own learning. Weaknesses in teaching result from an over emphasis on the things pupils cannot do rather than encouraging them to look for how to improve. Teachers are not consistently alert to the needs of the most able and do not consistently challenge these pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory and out of school activities are good. Consequently, pupils enjoy school and attendance is above average.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher provides a clear vision and there is a strong emphasis on pupils' learning. As a result, parents are pleased with the way she is leading the school. Governors are supportive and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Until recently subject co-ordinators have been unsure about their responsibilities in relation to checking the progress of pupils. Consequently, the learning needs of the most able have not been consistently provided for. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement for more able pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Develop the skills of co-ordinators to lead and manage their areas of responsibility effectively in order to have a greater impact on pupils' achievement.
- Improve consistency in the quality of teaching and learning to bring it all to the level of the best teaching seen in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall achievement is satisfactory and standards are slightly above average by the end of Year 6. Because of good teaching, children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and most reach the early learning goals expected and some exceed them. A new teacher has quickly established herself in Reception, enabling children to settle and make effective progress. Standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 and children's progress is good through Years 1 and 2. The number of children reaching the higher levels is better than average.

Standards by the end of Year 6 fell in 2005, from above average to below average, although achievement remained satisfactory, given pupils' individual starting points. Several pupils joined or left the school in the year group with a negative impact on results. The school has compelling data to indicate that standards recovered in 2006, to reach a position slightly above average, representing satisfactory progress. The school's system of tracking progress shows a slowing of progress in Years 3 and 4, with better progress in Years 5 and 6. In English, mathematics and science, the school compares favourably with other schools in reaching the average national curriculum level, but not the higher level. More able pupils are not achieving as they should. Boys and girls make similar progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

These areas are good and are strengths of the school. Throughout school, pupils have very good attitudes in the classroom and show genuine enjoyment in their work. Behaviour is excellent and a good deal of self-discipline is evident. Pupils are considerate and caring towards each other; relationships are very good. They say that they feel safe in school, bullying has been stamped out and that teachers are always on hand to help and support. Pupils know how to follow a healthy lifestyle; for example, they take advantage of after-school sport and physical activities. Attendance is above average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and is central to the strong Christian ethos in school. Rewards for good work or actions are highly valued, and interesting and collaborative activities encourage good social interaction. Good links with the church instil a sense of spirituality in school. Pupils have a good understanding

of local and national traditions but are less well informed about the varied range of cultures in society.

Pupils develop a sense of community and contribute to decision making through their school council. They have achieved some good improvements, such as the 'really good stuff' purchased for playtimes. They enjoy taking responsibilities around school. These factors help to prepare them well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There is some good teaching, but the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, teaching and learning are good. This is why standards and achievement by the end of Year 2 have been at a consistently good level in recent years. There is less consistency in Key Stage 2. The oldest pupils make the best progress. Here teaching and learning are good, the pace of lessons is brisk and pupils are encouraged to make their own decisions about learning. Where the teaching is at its best, children concentrate and cooperate well. Information from assessment is used well to plan lesson activities effectively and ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are met. Where teaching is less effective, pupils follow routines but the pace of lessons is too leisurely. More able pupils are not challenged. Marking places too great an emphasis on the things pupils have not done well, rather than helping them understand what they need to do to improve. In all lessons, teaching assistants work well to give less able pupils the support they need. As a result, they make similar progress to their classmates.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and there is good enrichment for pupils' learning. It is good in the Reception class where a stimulating range of opportunities invite children to explore and investigate.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, planning has been reviewed to provide more breadth and depth to the subjects they study and to take better account of how pupils of different ability or disposition learn. This means that pupils enjoy lessons but, in some in Key Stage 2 classes, the actual tasks presented to the more able do not stretch them fully. The new planning links subjects together so pupils can practise their skills, especially in computer work and writing. It has not had time, as yet, to make a full impact on learning, but some interesting and good lessons were seen. For example, in a Year 1 art lesson, pupils designed and made sculptures and produced prints using the computer.

The good range of after-school activities is popular with the pupils, and projects such as the creative week allow them to develop their talents. A good range of visits and visitors to school extends learning beyond the classroom and extends pupils' horizons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, with strengths in the care and support for pupils' personal development. Parents are appreciative of the fact that their children are happy and say that the school 'has a good feel'. Pupils are safeguarded well because essential checks are made on staff and there are well-established procedures for child protection, security and for eliminating possible risks. The school has good systems for rewarding conduct, effort and success, which underpin good personal development. Arrangements at lunchtimes and breaks ensure that pupils are well supervised and happily occupied. Home visits and meetings provided for children before they start school ensure that they settle quickly.

The school is in the process of developing better academic guidance for pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils have useful targets for learning in English, which they know and understand and are helping them to improve. Targets are not as effective for mathematics. The learning targets for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are vague and therefore not as helpful as they should be. Pupils who have gifts and talents are identified and a programme of activities is being developed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher provides good leadership and maintains a smooth running school in the absence, through illness, of the headteacher. Parents and governors appreciate the quality of her work and the focus on improvement. She is well supported by colleagues, particularly the assessment coordinator. They work together well to ensure that the school monitors its progress and considers the areas it needs to improve. This leads to a positive climate for learning and a willingness to move forward. There are clear expectations about the importance of personal development, and this has a positive impact on pupils in this aspect of their learning. Staff contribute their ideas to the school's self-evaluation. However, teachers with subject coordinator responsibilities were, until recently, unsure of their roles in relation to monitoring standards and the progress pupils make. They are not clear how they intend to improve aspects judged to be satisfactory, such as the use of learning targets to help pupils improve their work. Actions are not always linked to their impact on standards. This has led to insufficient understanding of aspects of the school's performance.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and check that statutory requirements are met. They review carefully what is happening in school. For example, they ensure that pupils have full access to the curriculum and have identified the slower progress made by more able pupils. However, they do not evaluate the effectiveness of their work.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Bamber Bridge St Aidan's Church of England Primary School

Larch Grove

Bamber Bridge

Preston

Lancashire

PR5 6GX

18 November 2006

Dear Children

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed coming to some of your lessons and talking to you about your work. We are pleased to tell you that your school provides a satisfactory education for you.

What we particularly liked about your school:

- the good Foundation Stage, and the Reception class, give you a good start
- the good quality of teaching and learning for those of you in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and who are the oldest
- your enjoyment of this happy school
- your outstanding behaviour and the way that you willingly take responsibility and help others
- your good attendance.

The adults in your school look after you well. We have asked your school to help those of you who are most able to reach the standards you are capable of, and to aim to get all the teaching and learning to the standard of the best in the school. We have also asked the school to check whether the planning of activities always gives you the best possible opportunities to learn. We know that you will continue to do your very best.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Onyon

Lead inspector