



Burnley St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119484
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291435
Inspection dates 5–6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Shirley Herring

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Burnley, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4–11		BB11 2DL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01282 426873
Number on roll (school)	135	Fax number	01282 426877
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Reverend Canon Tom Bill
		Headteacher	Mrs Alison Mitchell
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

Burnley St. Peter's is a smaller than average primary school serving an area of high social deprivation. A high proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Approximately half of the pupils are from a White British background with a similar proportion of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin. Many pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities and there are two cared for children. While English is an additional language of about half of the pupils, only a very small number are at the early stage of learning English. The school has links with the parish, the Excellence in Cities cluster, the Sure Start Nursery and with various colleges. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time is much higher than usual. The school operated without a permanent headteacher for two terms in the 2006 spring and summer terms. A new headteacher was appointed for September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13(3) of the Education Act, 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could be reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards and attendance. The school provides inadequate value for money.

Standards of attainment are low but they are showing clear signs of rising from the very low levels in 2005. The school's results that year in the national tests for 11-year-olds were poor and showed that the pupils' achievement was inadequate; indeed, it was in the lowest 1% of all schools nationally. Following this poor performance, the school responded well to the good support from the local authority to raise standards. Actions taken by the school resulted in an improvement in standards in 2006, and almost half of the pupils achieved the expected level in English and mathematics compared to around a fifth in 2005. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children make a sound start to their school life.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has set a clear agenda for improving standards, based on an accurate and realistic evaluation of the needs of the school. Actions taken have brought about improvements to the quality of teaching which is now satisfactory. Sharply focused plans for lessons have resulted in more effective learning and work is more accurately matched to meet the needs of the majority of pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress but, in some lessons, there is insufficient challenge for more able pupils and so they do not make as much progress as they could.

The school recognises that basic skills are weak and has devised a curriculum that places suitable emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy. However, although it is satisfactory overall, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing or to solve mathematical problems to improve their skills to a higher level. Newly appointed managers for literacy and numeracy are leading developments in their subject. They are working closely with local authority consultants to implement effective systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. The school can now identify potential underachievement in groups or individuals at an early stage and target any necessary support. The information from these systems shows clearly that most pupils have made satisfactory progress since September 2006; despite this improvement, standards remain low.

Pupils are supported and cared for well; as a result, their personal development is satisfactory. Pupils say they enjoy school, particularly creative aspects such as art club and drama. Pupils feel safe and are confident to tell an adult if anybody is calling names in the playground and say it is usually sorted out. They understand the value of a healthy lifestyle and sporting and physical activities such as aerobics are well attended. The school has introduced several initiatives to improve poor attendance, leading to some slight improvement, though attendance rates remain low.

The improvements over the last four terms have been accelerated this term as the headteacher leads the school forward with a realistic programme for development. Improvements in standards and in assessing and tracking pupils' progress and the slight improvement in attendance, show that the school has the capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by planning more opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces of writing and to solve problems.
- Increase the level of challenge for higher attaining pupils so that they achieve as well as they can.
- Work with parents to reduce the number of absences, including the number of extended holidays taken in term time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate and standards are low. Children start school in the Reception class with skills that are well below those usual for their age. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class but children's attainment is well below the national expectations when they move to Year 1.

In the 2005 national tests in Key Stage 1 the school's results were low in reading, writing and mathematics. Girls performed significantly better than boys who underachieved. The results for 2006 showed no overall improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level, though the performance of boys was better than the girls, reversing the previous position.

In Key Stage 2, following a declining trend over four years, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard for their age tumbled in 2005, with only approximately one pupil in five reaching the expected level in mathematics and English and no pupil achieving a higher Level 5 in either subject. The achievement of this group of pupils was very low, in the bottom 1% of schools in the country. Following these results, the school responded well to the extensive support given by the local authority. This resulted in an improvement in the school's results in English, mathematics and science in 2006. All the pupils in Year 6 reached the expected level in science though slightly fewer than half of the pupils reached the expected level in English or mathematics. The work of pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 shows that improvements to teachers' planning introduced by the headteacher have led to an increased rate of progress over the current term, although standards remain well below those expected nationally

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and cared for children are supported well in class and they are making sound progress, as do the very small number of pupils at an early stage of learning English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are satisfactory. A clear emphasis on developing personal, social and emotional development in the Reception class helps children to settle quickly into school life. Pupils enjoy school, and the after-school clubs are well attended. Pupils feel safe and are confident to tell an adult if anybody is unkind in the playground. Most pupils behave well and they understand the value of a healthy diet and join in sporting activities enthusiastically. They support many activities in the community, for example the school choir is in great demand to sing at various events over the Christmas period. A school council has been established this term to enable the pupils to make a structured contribution to the school community and they are currently discussing the purchase of new playground equipment. Pupils' low literacy and numeracy skills as they leave school do not prepare them well for later life.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual, moral and social awareness is based in the school's Christian tradition, while emphasising respect for pupils of different faiths. This is demonstrated by the links with the Burnley Building Bridges Project, which fosters links between the Christian and Moslem communities. Attendance is well below average. Initiatives introduced by the headteacher are having some effect but improvement is slow. While some families still take extended holidays in term time, some now include the normal holiday time to reduce the days they are absent from school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Recent improvements in lesson planning have resulted in improvements in learning. The purposes of lessons are clear in teachers' planning and are explained to the pupils, who have an increased understanding of what is expected of them. This is helping to improve the quality of their learning and stimulates their motivation to work hard. They take a keen interest in how successful they have been. Plans for lessons take account of the learning needs of most groups of pupils. Those who have learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from the skilful support they receive and make satisfactory progress. The small numbers of pupils who are learning English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress and benefit from the emphasis in many lessons on extending the pupils' vocabulary. In the large majority of lessons, pupils concentrate well, particularly if they are working closely with an adult. In some lessons there is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils and so they do not learn as well as they can. This is partly because they do not have sufficient opportunities to work independently to develop more advanced skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a suitable emphasis on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills further by writing longer pieces in English lessons and in other subjects. Similarly, planned opportunities to develop a greater understanding of mathematics by investigating and solving problems are limited.

A new programme for personal, social and health education is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development. The school has good links with other agencies to provide specific expertise when needed. Learning is supported well by a good range of activities outside normal lesson times, which are well attended. A homework club meets at lunchtime, recognising that many pupils attend Mosque School at the end of the day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Guided by its Christian ethos, the school provides a good level of care and support for all its pupils, including the most vulnerable. All the recommended systems and procedures are in place to safeguard the pupils. Other professionals who work with pupils who have particular needs were keen to say how school staff showed an exceptional level of commitment to those in most need to help them improve. There is a good level of support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, helping them to make satisfactory progress. Guidance is satisfactory. The school has set targets for individual pupils in reading, writing and mathematics this term and pupils are aware of what they need to do to improve. The pupils' work shows that this is successfully providing an incentive for their effort and is quickening their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is keenly aware of a significant legacy of underachievement and is dealing with it constructively. The school has responded well to the extensive support from the local authority and this helped to raise standards in Year 6 in 2006. The headteacher has set a clear agenda to build further on this improvement, based on a prompt, realistic and accurate evaluation of the needs of the school. Improvements in tracking pupils' progress and in lesson planning have resulted in pupils making better progress this term. The headteacher has the strong support of staff in bringing about improvements and staff report that morale and teamwork are good. Along with the improvements in standards in Key Stage 2 in 2006, in lesson planning and in procedures to assess and track pupils' progress, this shows that the school has the capacity to improve.

New middle managers, leading developments in literacy and numeracy, are providing sound leadership. They are working closely with local authority consultants and are instrumental to the implementation of improved systems to assess and track pupils' progress. The governing body provides sound support for the school and is well aware of the improvements needed. There has been some improvement in the provision for the Foundation Stage since the last inspection.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4

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	4
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Burnley St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Church Street

Burnley

Lancashire

BB11 2DL

7 December 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I inspected your school recently; it is a very friendly place. I enjoyed talking to the school council. I know they are new to their job but they have some interesting ideas for the school.

All the adults in school take good care of you. Those of you who find some of the work a little difficult have a lot of help from adults in the class. Those who work a little faster could have more difficult activities to really think about.

To help everyone to get better in literacy and numeracy I have asked the school to give you more problems to solve in mathematics and more writing to do in subjects such as history. You can help by concentrating hard even when there is no adult sitting with your group.

To help you to do the best you can it is really important that you come to school every day, unless, of course, you are poorly.

Another inspector will visit your school in about a year to see how well you are doing.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Shirley Herring

Lead Inspector