

Barton St Lawrence Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119562
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291463
Inspection date	5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	53
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Louise Birchall
Headteacher	Mrs Kathryn Pym
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2002
School address	Jepps Avenue Barton Preston Lancashire PR3 5AS
Telephone number	01772 862664
Fax number	01772 862664

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves families in the immediate rural location of Barton and also from a much wider geographical area of Preston. The proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. When children enter the Nursery, their development is above average for their age. There is a lower proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to that seen in most schools but a high proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A pre-school group operates on the site for five mornings each week.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Barton St Lawrence is a good school and provides good value for money. There are some outstanding features. Inspection judgements match the accurate evaluation made by the management, staff and governors. Parents have very positive views of the school. One wrote, 'My child thoroughly enjoys school and is being stretched to make the most of his abilities.' Parents' and pupils' views are sought regularly; they are valued and acted upon. The 'Friends' of the school ensure that the school retains its high profile within the community and help to provide additional resources.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and a strength of the school. Their behaviour is excellent and attendance is well above average. The school's religious foundation provides a strong caring ethos, which ensures that pupils feel secure. Children receive a good start to their education in the Reception year and make good progress in Years 1 and 2. For Year 6 in 2006, standards were above average and pupils achieved well from their starting points. School records, inspection evidence and initial results from the 2007 tests show that standards for the present Year 6 pupils are even higher and they are making good progress. Over a half of them are working at a higher than expected level in mathematics and science but fewer are in English. This is because writing skills are not as well developed as those in reading.

Teaching is good and pupils enjoy their work. Lessons challenge pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills, providing good opportunities for them to be independent and active learners. They are given excellent advice on how to improve and are encouraged to evaluate their own work and progress. The curriculum is good and pupils take advantage of the excellent range of out-of-school activities to develop their interests and talents. The Healthy School Award recognises the good work done in teaching about healthy living and generating pupils' enthusiasm for exercise and sport. Pupils have varied opportunities to experience responsibility, share in decision-making and carry out a range of jobs diligently. This prepares them well for their future lives, whilst also contributing to the strong sense of community and pride in school.

Management is good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership which promotes strong teamwork and is constantly driving the school forward. Attention to safety issues, including checking on the suitability of staff and helpers, is meticulous. Excellent partnerships with the church and local schools provide valuable additional learning and social experiences. These include extended computer work, sporting opportunities and learning about business and the community. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. All the key issues have been addressed and the strengths reported on then have been maintained. There is good capacity for the school to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils working at the higher level in writing to match the high numbers doing so in reading, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are well above average and pupils achieve well. Children's attainment at entry to Reception varies widely between individuals and from year to year but is generally just above average. Children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of the Reception

year, their attainment is securely above average with some children achieving well in excess of usual expectations.

In the 2006 teacher assessments for Year 2, standards were well above average and progress was good. A similar picture is provisionally emerging in the 2007 assessments, with a very high proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3, especially in reading. In this school, the numbers in each year group are very small and attainment fluctuates depending on the percentages of pupils who are more able or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In the 2006 tests for Year 6 pupils, standards were above average, which represents good progress from that group's starting point and considering the mix of abilities. The school's targets were exceeded by a large margin. Reliable records and initial results from the 2007 tests show that attainment for this year is much higher than usually seen for Year 6 pupils. Expectations have been exceeded at the average Level 4 in all subjects and the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science. They fell short in English because pupils' writing is not up to the very high standard of their reading. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and have good self-esteem. Boys and girls do equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and the older ones exhibit maturity and self-discipline. All age groups enjoy the exacting challenges presented to them and work very hard. Pupils say there is no bullying; they feel totally safe and have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They take very good advantage of opportunities for sport and exercise, including the early morning 'wake and shake' sessions. Attendance is well above average.

Excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development stems from the school's caring ethos. The quality of relationships is excellent and this helps pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem. They collaborate very well in lessons and on the playground, creating a harmonious community. Pupils know about, and respect, faiths and cultures that are different from their own. Spiritual development is continually supported by the school's religious foundation; it is well promoted in assemblies and in work across the curriculum. Pupils express their views clearly through the school council and make a good contribution to decision-making. For example, improvements to the playground and cloakroom facilities were made at their request. In excellent preparation for their future economic well-being, pupils are involved in enterprise projects, develop good skills of literacy and mathematics and take responsibility for jobs around school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Tasks are very well planned to cater for pupils' differing abilities and ages. The more able have excellent challenge to stretch them. Well trained teaching assistants provide good, sensitive support for pupils who need extra help, enabling them to do well.

Lessons have a fast pace and include a good amount of practical problem-solving and investigative work. These factors help to maintain pupils' concentration and to develop skills of independent working. Teaching and learning in Reception are good because children have

very good adult support and are encouraged to explore their world and become independent. They also learn a great deal from working in groups alongside infant pupils, especially in communication and collaborative skills. Throughout school and across subjects, teachers constantly assess pupils' progress and work is often planned on a personalised basis, ensuring that individual needs are fully met. The junior pupils have a wealth of prompts and reference material in their classes to support their writing but the infants have little to hand in the way of word banks or dictionaries. Parents support the homework programme very well and many volunteers bring their skills to the classroom to enhance learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and enrichment for learning is outstanding. Lessons promote pupils' academic, creative and physical skills in a balanced way and pupils learn a modern foreign language. Throughout the school, a good emphasis is placed on practising skills in literacy and mathematics although more could be done to stretch the more able in writing. The curriculum and spacious learning environment for the Reception class are stimulating and provide good opportunities for practical work, indoors and out.

Pupils are well motivated by the creativity in planning, which links subjects together. For example, in 'sports week', pupils calculated averages in data from athletic events and younger ones wrote about sports day. The curriculum is enriched extremely well by a range of visits and visitors to the school and through themed events, such as 'science week'. Such exciting opportunities extend life experiences and help to make learning fun. An excellent selection of interesting extra-curricular activities, including sport, arts and music, are enjoyed by around 95% of pupils. The clubs change regularly so interest is maintained and pupils enjoy trying out new things.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school takes excellent care of its pupils and their welfare is at the heart of its work. Child protection and health and safety procedures are firmly established. Excellent links with the playgroup, together with visits arranged prior to starting school, ensure that Reception children settle quickly. Very good transition arrangements are in place and pupils say they are confident about their move to secondary school.

Teachers track individual pupils' progress constantly and include pupils in reviews of their work. Marking is very helpful and often includes a 'mini-target' to help pupils correct any mistakes made. Pupils have goals for future learning, giving clear advice on what they need to do to improve in the longer term. Teachers also inform them of what they are expected to achieve in each lesson. This excellent guidance enables pupils to critically evaluate their progress and to set their own, additional targets. It is a major factor in the good progress seen and in maintaining pupils' ambitions.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall with some outstanding features. The headteacher provides excellent leadership, which is based firmly on the drive for high achievement. The

excellent caring ethos is shared by staff who work enthusiastically to ensure that pupils have equal access to all activities. The school knows its strengths and accurately identifies where there is a need for improvement. This is done effectively through an annual cycle of checking and evaluating provision and by gathering the views of parents and pupils. Although subject managers have few opportunities to observe lessons, they have a good overview of provision in their subjects and are fully involved in evaluating the work of the school.

The learning environment is stimulating, administration is very effective and standards of maintenance and cleanliness are very good. These factors reflect a shared sense of pride among all adults at the school and reflect their commitment to providing the best for the pupils. Governors understand the strengths of the school thoroughly and take a good, active and critical role in the process of monitoring the school's performance. In this small school, there is no senior tier of management and some governors also play a key role in supporting the headteacher. Governance is good and all statutory requirements are met.

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Annex A

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?	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	1

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?	1

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barton St Lawrence Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, PR3 5AS

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I recently visited your school. You made my visit enjoyable and gave me some very useful help. In return, I would like to share my findings with you.

Barton St Lawrence is a very friendly school. Your attitudes and behaviour are excellent and you take very good care of each other. As one pupil said, 'We are one big happy family.' You work hard and are making good progress. Well done, you are a credit to your school and families.

The headteacher and staff go to great lengths to make sure you are safe and happy. You like your teachers and the interesting lessons that they prepare for you. I think that you play a very good role in decision-making and your suggestions have led to several improvements in school. Please thank your parents for sending lots of replies to the questionnaire. The vast majority are pleased with what the school provides especially the small class sizes and the range of after-school clubs.

You are making good progress and you achieve higher standards in your work than in most schools. You use your targets for learning well and are good at checking your own progress and deciding what needs improving. All of these good points will be of help to you as you grow older so keep up the good work. There is one main area for improvement. Many of you work at a high level in reading but fewer do so in writing. Your teachers agree that you could do better and will be looking at ways of helping you do this.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations I had and for letting me know your views so clearly. There is a great deal about your school of which you and the staff can be proud. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector