



# Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 119616  
**Local Authority** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 291482  
**Inspection dates** 18–19 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Jennifer Taylor

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Birkrig
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Skelmersdale, Lancashire
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		WN8 9BN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01695 724730
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	304	<b>Fax number</b>	01695 50790
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Barbara Price
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Peter Whitby
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This large primary school is located in an area of severe social and economic disadvantage, which is reflected in the high proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Most children begin Nursery with attainment well below that expected for their age. A well above average proportion of pupils have a learning difficulty and/or disability and the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is high. All pupils are English speaking, and the vast majority are from White British backgrounds.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Bishop Martin is a good school with many excellent features.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and some lessons are outstanding. Lessons are generally imaginative, stimulating and relevant to the pupils' lives. Pupils learn to think for themselves, becoming independent learners. Imaginative teaching and interesting lessons ensure that pupils enjoy their learning through a wide range of experiences.

In relation to their low starting points, most pupils' achievement is good and they generally make good progress throughout the school although standards are below average. Good provision in the Foundation Stage enables the children to make good progress towards the standards expected for their age. Lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities are identified very early and the school helps them to make exceptionally good progress. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of pupils than is found in most schools exceed the standard expected for their age in the national tests in writing and mathematics in both Year 2 and Year 6.

Pupils are eager to learn and their behaviour is exemplary. Parents are very pleased with the school and the education and care their children receive. One parent wrote, 'We are happy with every aspect of Bishop Martin, and the staff and governors should be proud of their achievements.'

Pupils and staff have an exceptionally strong sense of social and community responsibility. The staff provide excellent role models and work hard to establish a caring community in which every member of the school is valued equally. Christian values run through every strand of the school's life. Pupils gain strongly in confidence and skills as they move through school and express their feelings and opinions well. Pupils take an active part in making the school a happy, healthy and safe place in which to learn. All necessary child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place. Their excellent personal development and sound basic skills ensure that the pupils are prepared well for the next phase of their education.

The school's system for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress is excellent and helps to ensure that all children make good progress. The curriculum is rich and varied with emphasis on enjoyment and enquiry.

Leadership and management are good and give the school a strong sense of purpose and direction. Highly effective monitoring of its work ensures that the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas for improvement. Because of this, the school has improved well since the last inspection. Standards have been rising for some time in English and are also much higher in information and communication technology. The school's record of improvement and its accurate self-evaluation show that it has a good capacity to improve further. Financial management is sound and the school provides good value for money.

## What the school should do to improve further

- The school should ensure that all pupils who are capable of doing so exceed the standards expected for their age in writing and mathematics.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well even though standards are below average. The results of national tests are below average for each key stage but there has been some improvement. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. The majority of children begin Nursery with very low attainment; well below the levels expected. They make good progress from their low starting points, particularly in reading and personal and social development, but many children do not reach expected standards by the time they join Year 1. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1, but standards by the end of Year 2 are still below average, although improving in reading and writing, as shown by the national test results.

Pupils sustain their good progress in Key Stage 2. The national test results in Year 6 show continuing improvement in English, in which they are now average. They are also average in science, as they have been for a number of years. Although they are below average overall, this is because few children exceed the expected levels in writing and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology are improving and are average. Despite making similar progress to that of girls, the standards reached by boys are lower than those of girls. Pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties make outstanding progress because of the excellent care and support they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding and this aspect is a strength of the school. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The children learn how to behave well and get along with each other. The spiritual quality of much of what the children do is exceptional in helping them to experience and appreciate the world around them. Children understand how to stay safe and healthy. Almost all of the older pupils benefit from the school's participation in the local Excellence Cluster and enjoy a wide range of challenging and exciting activities. Over time, pupils grow in confidence and become independent, articulate and caring. They show respect for each other and look after one another. There is no evidence of racism or bullying. Pupils' behaviour is excellent because they enjoy school and have very good attitudes to learning. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Assemblies are joyous occasions and reflect exceptional spiritual development. The children visit many places of interest including a residential visit to Crosby Hall. They experience creative elements of cultural education and are encouraged to expand their

knowledge of other faiths and cultures; for example, through studying African music. Pupils contribute to their community in numerous ways. The school council is regularly consulted and they have recently introduced a playground 'buddy' system.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good and some outstanding lessons were seen during the inspection. Pupils and parents say how interesting and enjoyable lessons are and this was apparent in the lessons observed. The quality of the working relationships is the key factor. Staff have high expectations of the children's work and behaviour. Teaching assistants are an integral part of the teaching team and provide very good support. Staff in the Nursery and Reception classes ensure that children's personal and emotional development is the central focus of their work, helping these young and often insecure children to flourish and make good progress. The rest of the staff build very successfully on this foundation, teaching the pupils to think critically so that they begin to understand and extend their own learning. The teaching staff use their assessments, including their marking of pupils' work and their good subject knowledge, to plan lessons well. However, some potentially higher-attaining pupils do not achieve the higher levels in writing and mathematics tests in Year 2 and Year 6. The staff are aware of this and have good plans to continue to raise achievement and standards. Support is excellent for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the challenge provided for talented and gifted pupils is rich and varied. The whole staff undergo regular professional development and apply it successfully to update and improve their teaching.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It has some outstanding features, particularly in enrichment and extra-curricular activities. The emphasis is on challenge and enjoyment to engage the pupils' interest and encourage them to learn. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes experience interesting and exciting learning activities, which are very carefully planned. For example, a search for dinosaurs in the Nursery with a backpack, binoculars and torches was a real motivation for the children. From Year 1 to Year 6, the staff focus on English and mathematics, but also ensure that pupils have a rich diet of experiences across other subjects including French. Since the previous inspection, pupils enjoy increased access to computers, which are used well in lessons. Pupils' personal development is at the heart of lesson-planning, enabling them to become confident, skilled learners by the end of Year 6, well-equipped to benefit from the next stage of their education. Enrichment activities and extra-curricular clubs extend the curriculum superbly and all children are included. Among a myriad of activities, the children eagerly participate in an inter-schools public speaking competition. Excellent partnerships with parents, participation in the Excellence Cluster, and

collaboration with other local schools and colleges add value to the pupils' learning experiences.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school gives pupils an outstanding level of care, guidance and support. This is a community in which every member of the school is valued equally and this is a strength of the school. Support is impressive for the many pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and helps many of them to reach higher levels than might be expected. The high expectations set by the headteacher are shared by staff and pupils. Monitoring of pupils' progress is very thorough and the teaching staff understand clearly which pupils need help in their personal and/or academic development. The staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils are safe and that all required safety and safeguarding procedures are in place. Pupils are taught to behave safely, and to look after one another. The outstanding care provided includes pupils' mental and physical well-being. Guidance for pupils is based on thorough, careful assessment. Pupils gain sufficient confidence to express their feelings and opinions well. There are close links with outside agencies, particularly speech and language therapy services. The local Excellence Cluster initiative has been seized upon by staff to provide a wide range of challenging and exciting activities for the benefit of almost all older pupils. There is an effective personal, social and health education programme, which contributes to the pupils' excellent personal development.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The school's positive ethos results in pupils' excellent personal development. The experienced and caring headteacher provides strong leadership and is supported very well by all staff. He provides a clear vision for the school's progress and plans are in place to make improvements. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is outstanding and the high levels of motivation of staff and children result in the high standard of provision seen. All staff work closely together as a team, sharing information and decision-making, and care is taken to ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to learn and enjoy. The quality of teaching and learning is carefully and frequently monitored by the headteacher, subject leaders and governors. Staff benefit from effective professional training to improve their skills. Governance is excellent. Governors support the school very well and show a thorough knowledge of its strengths and the areas to improve. They are actively involved in all aspects of the school and pose challenging questions.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

Bishop Martin Church of England Primary School

Birkrig

Skelmersdale

Lancashire

WN8 9BN

18 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school last week. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at the work you do. We particularly liked sharing assemblies with you. Bishop Martin is a good school and we understand why you enjoy coming to school so much.

There are many things that we particularly liked about your school. We saw how much you enjoy school and how enthusiastic you are about everything you do. Your behaviour is excellent, in class and outside at play, even in rough weather. We liked your lessons, which were enjoyable and fun so that you all listened carefully and tried to do your best. We saw that you take part in many exciting things, such as fencing, public speaking and learning French. We noted that you understand how to stay safe and healthy and that you look after one another.

We also looked at what school might do to make things even better. We think that more of you in Year 2 could reach Level 3 in writing and mathematics, and we think also that there are more children in Year 6 could reach Level 5 in writing and mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Taylor, Eric Jackson and June Tracey

Your inspection team