

St Barnabas Church of England VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109144
Local Authority	Bristol, City of
Inspection number	309897
Inspection date	27 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Alison Grainger

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gail Guest
Headteacher	Claire Waters
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Albany Road Montpelier Bristol BS6 5LQ
Telephone number	01173 772391
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the start given to children in the Nursery and Reception Year and children's standards on entry to Year 1; how well teaching and academic guidance promote progress in Years 1 to 6; the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being; and how well leaders evaluate the impact of provision on pupils' progress and take action for improvement. Evidence was gathered from the school's data on pupils' progress; visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work; discussions with staff, governors, parents and pupils; and analysis of responses to the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments of these areas, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. More than half the pupils have English as an additional language. About a quarter of pupils are from families with refugee or asylum seeker status. About half the pupils are eligible for free school meals. There is more movement of pupils in and out of the school other than at the usual times of joining or leaving than in most schools. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is above average. Although there is some variation in attainment on entry from year to year, taking the intake as a whole, children's starting points are below the level expected. Skills are often well below the expected level in communication, language and literacy.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It lives its vision statement that, 'We let our light shine at St Barnabas'. As pupils point out, the school is not only good, but it is also getting better and it already has some outstanding features. 'Brilliant school!' is the verdict of the school council. Parents and pupils are right when they say that the school successfully includes the many cultures in the community. As one parent commented, 'I am really proud that my children are here where they get respect for what they believe. Our headteacher is a good role model. She is respectful.' As another parent observed, 'There is a sense of gentleness and kindness, as well as clear rules and encouragement to behave well.' It is no wonder that pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding.

Pupils love school and almost all behave very well in lessons and around the school. They are keen to learn and take real pride in their work. Relationships between pupils from different cultures are excellent. One pupil said, 'Friends don't care about colour and countries. We all get on and want to make friends.' Older pupils readily support younger ones. Pupils' contribution to the community is outstanding. Those who are 'peer mediators', for example, contribute much to the harmonious relationships. Pupils say that bullying is rare and is not tolerated. They know a good deal about how to stay fit and healthy. They say that they feel very safe at school.

Achievement is good and, by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. Pupils at an early stage of learning English achieve as well as others. All are prepared well for the next stage of education and their future lives. Teaching is good and is the main influence on pupils' rate of progress. Pupils are right when they say, 'Teachers teach you well and put some fun in.' Focused and accurate teaching, supported by positive relationships and good humour, promotes effective learning in many lessons. There are examples of outstanding teaching, characterised by high expectations and excellent management of pupils and activities, with every moment used fully to move learning on. However, teaching is not consistently good in all years. There are occasions when activities are not matched closely enough to all pupils' needs.

The variation in the quality of teaching means that, although progress is good overall during pupils' time in the school, it is better in some years than in others. Teaching ensures that children get off to a strong start in the Nursery and Reception Year. The gap between children's attainment and the nationally expected standards narrows by the time children transfer to Year 1. Nevertheless, standards remain below average at the end of Year 2, even though pupils are currently moving on at a good rate in Year 2. The most significant gains are made in Years 5 and 6 where standards are really pushed up because teaching challenges all groups of pupils very effectively.

Pupils find learning interesting because the curriculum is outstanding. The school has been really innovative in making sure that the topics studied relate to pupils' needs, interests and cultural and social roots. The 'community curriculum' draws on people, places and resources in the community and takes pupils out into the community. The reading recovery programme and the school's 'Every Child a Reader' project have really accelerated pupils' progress in reading over the last 18 months. Many lower attaining pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have made tremendous spurts of progress in reading skills. The school has also had some good success with its focus on solving word problems in mathematics and is

starting on the right course of action to raise writing standards. An excellent range of additional activities, such as clubs, further enhances pupils' enjoyment of school.

Not only are the pastoral care and attention to pupils' personal welfare outstanding, but pupils also receive good academic guidance. Marking and individual targets are used well to tell pupils what they are already doing well and how they can improve their performance. Pupils value the feedback that the teachers give them on how well they are doing. Older pupils, in particular, also benefit from opportunities to evaluate their fellow pupils' work and to offer mutual support and guidance. The school is rigorous in tracking the progress of different groups of pupils.

The main reason for the school's success is that leadership and management, including self-evaluation, are good. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve. The enthusiasm and commitment of staff are tangible. The good contribution of middle managers complements and reinforces the strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Governance is satisfactory and is developing well with governors finding new ways, for example, of reaching out to parents.

Partnerships with parents and the community are strong. However, pupils' attendance rate is below average, partly, but not entirely, because of families taking extended holidays overseas. The school recognises that, while already strongly encouraging good attendance, its partnerships with parents and community leaders need to be used even more intensively to improve attendance. Almost all parents who made their views known are delighted with the school. A few feel that the school could do more to seek parents' views. The headteacher agrees that even more can be done to gain parents' views, even though a lot is already done.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The many strengths in the school's provision are evident from the moment that children enter the Nursery. Here, a strong partnership with parents is established. On the morning of the inspection, for example, the Nursery was a hive of activity as parents and children shared books together and new book boxes were given out for children to take home. Teaching and the curriculum promote good progress during children's time in both the Nursery and Reception classes. There is a good focus on meeting children's diverse needs and helping those at an early stage of learning English to develop their skills and confidence in this area. The Foundation Stage leader has accurately identified the most important next steps to make the provision even better. She is keen, for example, to develop team teaching across the Nursery and Reception classes to meet children's needs even more effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers closely match activities to all pupils' needs so that progress is consistently good in all years.
- Intensify action, through the partnership with parents and the community, to improve pupils' attendance.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

28 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Barnabas Church of England Primary School, Bristol, BS6 5LQ

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your school.

You told me that you enjoy school very much and I saw that you work hard and do your best. Your behaviour was very good when I visited your lessons and saw you about the school. Your personal development is excellent.

It was good to see how well you all get on together. You told me that it does not matter what your background is, you want to be friends with each other. You also told me about the brilliant work of the peer mediators in helping people to get on well with each other. You make an excellent contribution to the community.

Your school is right to be proud of you and you are right to be proud of your school. St Barnabas is a good school. The school council told me that it is getting even better and I agree. You make good progress during your time in the school. This is because the teaching is good and the curriculum is excellent.

The school cares for you very well indeed. You told me that you feel very safe at school. You get good help with your work. You told me that you appreciate the guidance you are given through marking and targets.

There are two things that I have asked the school to do to help it to become even better. They are:

- Make sure that the activities in lessons are always just at the right level for each of you so that you always make good progress.
- Work intensively with your parents and the community leaders to improve your attendance.

You and your parents can help by trying to make sure that you have good attendance. Please keep working hard, doing your best, and 'letting your light shine at St Barnabas'.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger Lead Inspector

28 March 2008

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Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger
Lead Inspector