

St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119374
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313272
Inspection dates	13–14 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter McKay

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev James Read
Headteacher	Mrs Irene Wensley
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2004
School address	Hallfold Hall Street Whitworth Rochdale Lancashire OL12 8TL
Telephone number	01706 344631
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average. Most pupils come from areas with above average levels of social and economic disadvantage and the proportion eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are from White British families and there are significantly more boys than girls. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, particularly so in the junior year groups. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The school provides some services as a designated children's centre which will open fully once accommodation is available. The school has achieved National Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is satisfactory with strengths in the pupils' personal development. The pastoral care and support is outstanding, underpinned by highly effective links with outside agencies. Transition arrangements are good, both for pupils new to the school and for those who are leaving. The school provides a welcoming, friendly and safe place to learn. It has strong links with the church and local community and is highly valued for its family ethos and strong commitment to Christian values. Consequently, pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are good.

From starting points which are below that typically seen the pupils make satisfactory progress and their achievement is satisfactory. The results of the 2007 national assessments and tests were below average at the end of Year 2, especially in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, the results were below average in English, mathematics and science; they were stronger in mathematics. Over time, standards have been broadly average by the end of Year 6 and this reflects the current standards which are better than the recent test results suggest. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils are open and friendly and most are very courteous, particularly to visitors. Good relationships are based on positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour, although pupils have some concerns about a small minority who occasionally disturb lessons. Instances of serious misbehaviour are extremely rare. Many pupils take on responsibilities around school and contribute well to community events and fundraising activities. Regular achievement assemblies celebrate pupils' academic and personal successes. This boosts their self-confidence and encourages them to work hard at all the school has to offer. Pupils develop sound skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), which prepares them appropriately for the next stage of their education.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Where the teaching is most effective, questioning is used well to assess the pupils' learning and the pitch of the activities provides the right amount of challenge for all groups of pupils. In these lessons, the pupils make good progress and they are involved in assessing how well they are making progress towards their learning targets. The teaching and learning, however, are not consistently good throughout the school because assessment information is not always used effectively and the pupils find learning from some of the worksheets dull. Teachers and teaching assistant work well together to support those pupils who need additional help.

The curriculum is satisfactory. The effective programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education develops the pupils' social skills and their awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. The curriculum is increasingly taught through the study of broad themes and topics which helps pupils to develop an understanding of the links between subjects. They appreciate the range and quality of extra-curricular activities which not only provide enjoyment but provide new experiences.

Care, guidance and support are good. Safeguarding systems meet national guidelines and risk assessments are in place. The work of the children's centre is helping to strengthen further the already good links with parents. The support and guidance provided for pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. Although the school has procedures for tracking pupils' progress and

for providing pupils with feedback on how well they are doing and how to improve, they are not used consistently.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong leadership and the school knows its strengths and areas for development well. Subject coordinators are taking a greater responsibility for evaluating and improving their areas, but criteria to assess the effectiveness of actions are not sufficiently focused on the pupils' progress and achievement. Monitoring of some areas also lacks effectiveness in ensuring that best practice is fully embedded across the school. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive of the school and are strongly committed to developing the school as a focal point of service to the community. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children are happy and well cared for. They settle quickly into planned routines as a result of a good induction programme and strong links with other pre-school settings. Children's skills are varied when they start but are generally below those typical for their age. For an increasing number, they are well below. As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress in most areas of learning. The majority of the current cohort of children are working close to the levels expected for their age, though levels of reading and writing are lower than in other areas of learning. There is a very strong focus on learning through independent play and the provision of continuous activities for all areas of learning at all times. An increasing use of timed activities helps preparation for the demands of Year 1. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Skilled and experienced staff plan well together as a team and have a clear understanding about how young children learn. Every effort is made to involve parents who receive guidance on suitable home-based activities and help with a weekly reading task. A very basic area, which is uncovered and lacks fixed equipment, restricts some outdoor activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that effective practice is embedded across the school.
- Measure the success of initiatives more on the impact on pupils' progress and achievement.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From starting points which are below that typically seen the pupils make satisfactory progress and their achievement is satisfactory. The results of national assessments and tests reflect a variable picture because of the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in some year groups and the high number of new pupils joining the older year groups. Cohorts are also small, so individual performance has a disproportionate influence on overall results.

The results at the end of Year 2 in 2007 were below average, especially in writing and mathematics. In writing, no pupil reached the higher level of attainment but in reading, the school exceeded the national figure for higher levels of attainment. At the end of Year 6, the results were below average in English, mathematics and science; they were stronger in mathematics where the school almost met the national figure for pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment.

Over time, standards have been broadly average by the end of Year 6 and this reflects the current standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, attend well and are keen to participate in additional activities. Most show positive attitudes to all aspects of school life and work cooperatively with adults and each other. Through regular achievement assemblies, the pupils' celebrate their academic and personal successes. This boosts their self-confidence and encourages them to work hard at all the school has to offer. Most are willing learners, although occasionally low level misbehaviour in lessons hinders learning. Pupils feel safe at school, do not have any concerns about bullying and are confident in the school's capacity to deal promptly and effectively with any problems. They have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle, conduct themselves safely in lessons and are well informed about aspects such as road safety and safe use of the internet. They keep fit by taking regular exercise in physical education lessons, swimming and sporting activities. Older pupils act with maturity and make a valuable contribution by taking on additional responsibilities, such as membership of the school council or helping younger children. Pupils contribute to church and community events, including fund raising activities, and have a good awareness of their social responsibilities. They are competent in using ICT and develop adequate skills in English and mathematics to prepare them for the next phase of education and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Classroom routines are well established and this promotes the pupils' learning. Relationships are good and frequent use of praise and encouragement helps to motivate pupils, most of whom are enthusiastic and hardworking. Pupils respond particularly well when given short term learning goals. The most effective teaching has many good features. These include careful explanation of precise objectives so pupils know what they are expected to learn; active whole class sessions, often involving practical activities which helps those who find concentrating for sustained periods difficult; effective questioning to assess learning; a good match of tasks and materials to needs; opportunities for pupils to work independently, to record learning in their own way and to be involved in the assessment of their own performance; and, marking which gives helpful guidance to the pupils on how to improve. When most of these elements are part of the lesson, the pupils make good progress. The teaching and learning, however, are not consistently good throughout the school because assessment information is not always used effectively and the pupils find learning from some

of the worksheets dull. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to plan the learning of those who require additional support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced with an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT. All pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn French. The effective programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education develops the pupils' social skills and their awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. Adaptations to make closer links between subjects through themes are beginning to increase the pupils' awareness of links between subjects and provide more opportunities for them to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. These adaptations are not yet fully effective in meeting the needs of all pupils in mixed-age classes. The school is already working to improve this. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of sporting and musical activities, frequent educational trips, visiting speakers and performance arts groups. These promote the pupils' enjoyment of learning and add to the breadth of their experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and pastoral care is outstanding. Teachers know the personal circumstances of pupils very well and respond quickly and successfully to any concerns. There are highly effective links with outside agencies, especially to support vulnerable pupils and those requiring additional support at different stages of their school life. Transition arrangements, for pupils new to the school or for those leaving, are highly effective. A good programme of liaison between staff, with new schools and with parents ensures a smooth transition and pupils settle quickly into their new environments. The work of the children's centre is helping to strengthen further the good links with parents. The required procedures for health and safety, safeguarding and child protection are in place. Academic support and guidance is satisfactory. Although the school has suitable procedures in place to track the pupils' progress and to provide pupils with feedback on their performance, these are not yet used effectively throughout the whole school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and has a clear view of the strengths and areas for development required to bring about higher standards. Responsibilities are delegated well amongst all staff and staff feel their views are valued. Comprehensive and robust systems for performance management and staff training are in place. Teamwork is developing well. The effectiveness of subject coordinators is improving as they are developing their roles in monitoring, evaluation and planning for improvement. However, this work is not as effective as it should be because there is insufficient emphasis on the impact of initiatives on the pupils' progress and achievement. Monitoring of some areas also lacks effectiveness in ensuring that best practice is fully embedded across the school. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive, actively involved and help to create strong links with the community. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

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?	2

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

17 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bartholomew's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, OL12 8TL

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I particularly enjoyed talking to you and finding out how much you enjoy school life. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and has many strengths. This was confirmed not only by you but also by your parents who say that the school is a welcoming and caring community. I certainly experienced the family atmosphere which everybody connected with the school values so highly. The school works hard to help you become responsible and confident young people and I was very impressed with how keen you are to be involved in so many different activities in and out of school. The achievement assembly I visited showed just how well you can achieve in all sorts of ways. I was pleased to hear that you find school a safe place and that adults are always ready to listen to you and help with any problems.

You could do even better. I have asked your school to make sure that the work you do in English, mathematics and science really makes you think and work hard so that the standards you reach are higher. To make sure that you are making good progress your school is also going to:

- make sure the best ideas are shared and that you all benefit from them
- make regular checks to make sure the best ideas are working.

Thank you once again for being so polite and helpful. All of you must continue to work hard, especially those who sometimes find concentrating difficult, and check for yourselves sometimes whether you are meeting your learning targets.

Best wishes

Peter McKay

Lead inspector